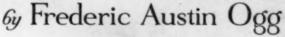
## MUNSEYS MAGAZINE Vol.LVI October 1915 No





## HER STRUGGLE FOR UNITY AND HER RISE AS A GREAT POWER





THE soil of Italy has been richly historic through a period of more than twenty-five hundred years. Nevertheless, with the exception of Norway and four Balkan states, the united kingdom of Italy is the youngest of independent European nations.

The semicentenary of the kingdom's establishment was celebrated only four years ago. The date of its founding was 1861, the year of the opening of the American Civil War, and the year immediately preceding that in which Bismarck, becoming chief minister of William I, began to lay

afresh the foundations of Prussian ascendency in Germany and of German ascendency in continental Europe.

Mention of Bismarck, and of Prussia, suggests a familiar but fundamental parallel of German and Italian history. England and France attained national unity in the early Middle Ages; Spain achieved it in the fifteenth century, and Switzerland hardly later. But the Italians and the Germans lagged far behind. Throughout the great stretch of their history they were grouped in small, independent, and mutually hostile states. Curiously, they

achieved national unity at almost precisely the same time; but not until within the memory of men still living.

The difficulties and the glories of the Italian Risorgimento, or "resurrection," culminating in the unification of the pen-

stages or periods. The first is the epoch of the colonization of the region south of the Tiber—Magna Græcia, as it was known—by the Greeks; and the splendid remains of Greek temples at Pæstum, in Sicily, and elsewhere, bear testimony still to the wide-



THE CA D'ORO, OR HOUSE OF GOLD, THE MOST GRACEFUL OF THE FOURTEENTH-CENTURY GOTHIC PALACES ON THE GRAND CANAL, VENICE

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insula and the building of the restless, ambitious, and growing Italian nation of today, appear in their full proportion only when we take into account the conditions created by a long and bewildering succession of wars, conquests, dominions, political experiments, and social and cultural developments.

Reduced to its simplest terms, the history of Italy falls into some eight or nine spread and substantial influence of the Hellenic element.

Almost coincident with the coming of the Greeks was the rise of Rome, first as the dominating city of the Latian plains, and later as the conqueror and ruler of the whole of the peninsula. In the late third century before Christ there was inaugurated that remarkable series of conquests whereby, with no clearly preconceived plan,



BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE

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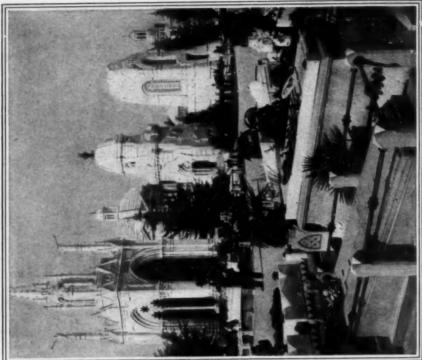
the dominion of the civilized world, from Britain to Persia, was gathered into the hands of the mistress of the Tiber. For Roman history—even the history of the empire at its zenith—is, after all, only a chapter in the history of Italy.

With the decline and eventual collapse of the empire in the west, Italy entered upon a period of several centuries of German invasion and state-building, accompanied by the rise of the Papacy and an imperfectly restrained growth of local and private powers. Now it was - notably after the deposing of Romulus Augustulus in 476—that the peninsula lost entirely that political solidarity which had been ac- the ancient bronze horses (now temporarily quired by the extension of Roman power in the third century—a solidarity destined never to be regained until the days of Vic-



REMOVED) ABOVE THE CENTRAL DOOR OF SAN MARCO, VENICE

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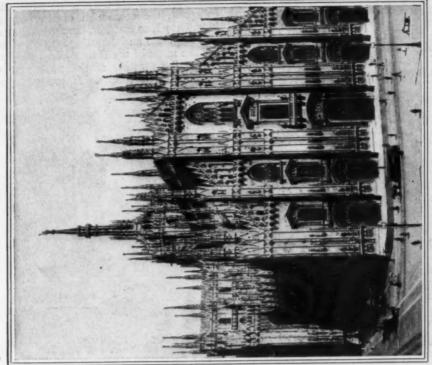


MONUMENTS IN THE CAMPO SANTO, MILAN—EXTENSIVE CEMETERIES FULL OF BLABORATE AND COSTLY MONUMENTS ARE AN INTERESTING FEATURE OF MANY OF THE ITALIAN CITIES

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THE GATEWAY OF THE ARSENALE, OR NAVY-YARD, OF VENICE—AMONG ITS
DECORATIONS ARE FOUR ANTIQUE LIONS BROUGHT FROM
GREECE IN THE SEVENTERNTH CENTURY

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THE CATHEDRAL OF MILAN, ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST ELABORATELY DECORATED CHURCHES IN EUROPE, BUILT IN THE GOTHIC STYLE, AND CONSTRUCTED ENTIRELY OF WHITE MARBLE

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AND IT HAS FIVE HUNDRED MARBLE COLUMNS

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tor Emmanuel, Cavour, and Garibaldi. No German people who reached Italy were able to duplicate the achievement of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain or of the Franks in Gaul. On the contrary, each successive incursion sowed fresh seeds of disunion.

In the year 800 the theory of a united

In 962, after the Carolingian power had collapsed, the coronation of the German king, Otto I, as emperor, brought Italy and Germany into an interesting affiliation, under the name of the Holy Roman Empire. This tying together of the two countries had important results. It promoted the



THE ARCO DEL SEMPIONE, OR SIMPLON ARCH, MILAN, BEGUN BY NAPOLEON, WHO MADE MILAN THE CAPITAL OF HIS KINGDOM OF ITALY

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Italy as an integral part of the empire was revived by the coronation of Charlemagne as Emperor of the Romans at the hand of Pope Leo III. But neither the great Frankish monarch nor his Carolingian successors ever acquired substantial control throughout the peninsula.

growth of culture in Germany, and it brought the rival emperors and Popes into close quarters. But, most clearly, it operated to retard unification both north and south of the Alps.

No emperor — not even the masterful Frederick Barbarossa — was ever able to



VERONA, THE CITY OF ROMEO AND JULIET — THE RIVER ADIGE AND THE CASTELLO SAN PIETRO, A MODERN BARRACK ON THE SITE OF AN ANCIENT CASTLE

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combat successfully the communes and other local powers in Italy, and to bring the country under effective control. But many emperors dabbled in Italian politics sufficiently to add to the confusion already existing south of the Alps, while at the same time giving the forces of disunion in Germany precisely the opportunity that they desired.

Until the fourteenth century the main threads of Italian history were the incessant quarrels of the Popes and emperors and the efforts of the latter to win the allegiance of the Italian people. Then the Papacy suffered eclipse; the imperial power waned; the *dramatis personae* became the great local ruling princes; and Italy entered upon the era of brilliant achievement which we designate the Renaissance. The men of the new age were indifferent to Pope and emperor alike, and to the entire mass of medieval ideas associated with papal and imperial pretensions.

The Renaissance ran its course in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The torch of intellectual enterprise and artistic

endeavor passed beyond the Alps, to the humanists of France, Germany, and England; and Italy fell back, as if exhausted, into a slough of skepticism, dilettanteism, and enervation.

Beginning with the invasion of the peninsula by the French king, Charles VIII, in 1404, the country became a field of exploitation for all manner of foreign adventurers and marauders — French, Spanish, and Austrian. Duchies and principalities were seized and ruled by aliens, while the native princes who were left upon their thrones were incapable of union, even in their own defense.

The era of ease, artificiality, effeminacy, and stagnation continued, with little relief, to the close of the eighteenth century. The times were uneventful; the outlook was unpromising. Through two hundred years Italy "was not a country in either a political or a sentimental sense; it was a place of recreation for gentlemen on the grand tour, pious folk bound Romeward, virtuosi seeking classical remains, and elderly statesmen hoping to cure the gout."

Italian affairs of the period were simply opera bouffe, on the most entrancing stage in the world; Italy itself was a paradise for the clergy and the noblesse, a place of

composed of the island of Sardinia, Piedmont, Savoy, and Nice, where alone in all Italy there lingered



THE OLD PALAZZO REALE, OR ROYAL PALACE, TURIN, THE RESIDENCE OF THE ROYAL HOUSE OF SAVOY BEFORE THE CAPITAL WAS REMOVED TO FLORENCE IN 1865

torment for the peasantry, who toiled and sweated for a bare subsistence.

The dominant forces in the politics of Europe during the past hundred and twenty-five years have been the twin principles of nationalism and democracy; and nowhere have the fruits of those principles been more abundantly in evidence than in the long disrupted and misgoverned peninsula of Italy.

The awakening of the Italian people to a consciousness of unity, strength, and aspiration dates with some exactness from the Napoleonic invasion of 1796, and the first phase of the Risorgimento is to be regarded as synchronous with the era of French domination, 1796-1814.

At the opening of this period two non-Italian dynasties shared the dominion of far the larger portion of the peninsula. To the Austrian Hapsburgs belonged the rich duchies of Milan and Tuscany, together with a preponderating influence in Modena. To the Spanish Bourbons belonged the Duchy of Parma and the important Kingdom of Naples, including Sicily.

Of independent states there were six
-the Kingdom of Sardinia, or Piedmont,

some measure of native political ability; the papal dominion, or States of the Church, cutting across the middle of the peninsula from sea to sea; the petty states of Lucca and San Marino; and the two ancient republics of Venice and Genoa, long since shorn of their empires, their maritime power, and their economic and political importance.

Almost everywhere absolutism prevailed, and absolutism commonly meant corruption and oppression. Italy was, in every sense, a land of the old régime.

During the two decades covered by the public career of Napoleon it became the work of the French to overturn completely the long-existing political arrangement of Italy, to substitute the dominion of France for that of Austria, to plant in the peninsula a wholly new and revolutionizing set of political and legal institutions, and, quite unintentionally, to fan to a blaze a patriotic zeal which through generations had smoldered unobserved.

The outbreak of the Revolution in France in 1789 was not without effect south of the Alps. In Milan, Tuscany, and Naples the ruling authorities yielded to popular pressure and set on foot reforms quite comparable with those which were being pushed through by the revolutionists at Paris. After the first enthusiasm was spent, however, and as the movement in France took on its more violent aspects, the princes drew back, even as did the authorities in England, and it became apparent that little permanent betterment could be expected at their hands.

Then came the Napoleonic invasion of



MONUMENT OF VICTOR EMMANUEL II, THE FIRST KING OF UNITED ITALY, IN THE PIAZZA CORVETTO, GENOA

From a copyrighted photograph by the H. C. White Company, New York



MONUMENT OF CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS IN GENOA,
THE CITY THAT CLAIMS HIM AS A
NATIVE SON

From a copyrighted photograph by the H. C. White Company, New York

1796, the shattering of Austrian power at Arcole and Rivoli, the proclaiming of the Cispadane Republic, and the promulgation of the Cispadane constitution, the first instrument of its kind in Italian history. With this beginning, the conqueror proceeded to rearrange the peninsula "as a housekeeper shifts the furniture in an unsatisfactory room."

In 1797 he enlarged the Cispadane Republic into the Cisalpine Republic. He took Nice and Savoy from Piedmont and annexed them to France. He abolished the

temporal power of the Pope, and "restored" the Roman Republic.

He turned the Kingdom of Naples into a republic and then back again into a monarchy, first for his brother, Joseph, and later for his general, Murat. He converted Genoa into the Ligurian Republic; he exwas introduced, serfdom was abolished or modified, taxation was reformed, privilege was swept away, public works were undertaken, and in general the conditions of the peninsula were assimilated as closely as might be to those prevailing in the France of the new régime.



THE CITY AND HARBOR OF GENOA-GENOA, LONG AN INDEPENDENT REPUBLIC, IS NOW THE LEADING COMMERCIAL SEAPORT OF ITALY

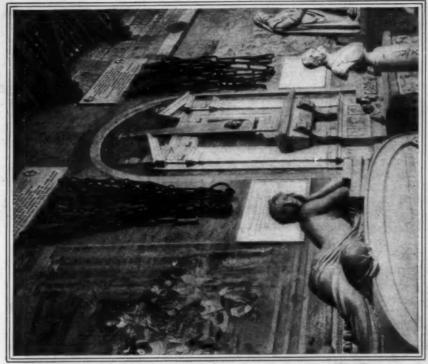
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tinguished the republic of Venice and parceled out its territories.

In 1805 he turned the northern part of the peninsula into the Kingdom of Italy, and at Milan placed upon his own head the old iron crown of the Lombard monarchs. Liguria, Parma, and Piacenza were annexed outright to France; and the boundaries of Napoleon's empire were later extended to include Tuscany, Rome, and the eastern shore of the Adriatic.

Not alone was the political geography of the country thus molded and remolded; constitutions were granted, elective assemblies were established, the Code Napoléon The new arrangements were likely to be maintained, however, only so long as the power of Napoleon lay behind them. At his coming the conqueror had been hailed as a deliverer; but in time the Italians were disillusioned. The cynical treatment meted out to Venice was but one of many proofs that Napoleon had no real regard for Italian political liberty.

It was manifest that the only object in uniting and reforming Italy was to make of her a powerful tributary of France. Forcible enlistment in the French armies was resented, the arrogance of the French officials was galling, nobles and clergy had



THE ANCIENT CHAINS OF THE HARBOR OF PISA, TAKEN AS SPOILS OF WAR BY GENOA AND FLORENCE IN 1362, BUT RESTORED TO PISA WHEN ITALY BECAME A UNITED NATION

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THE PIAZZA DEL DUOMO, PISA, WITH ONE OF THE NOBLEST GROUPS OF BUILD-INGS IN ITALY—THE BAPTISTERY, THE CATHEDRAL, AND THE CAMPANILE, FAMOUS AS THE LEANING TOWER OF PISA

From a copyrighted photograph by the H. C. White Company, New York

been despoiled of precious privileges, the peasants had been dealt with so equivocally that they were suspicious and bewildered, the pious had been scandalized by the indignities heaped upon the Pope. Altogether, the Italians as a people preferred the old order to the new.

If the rise of French power in Italy had been brilliant its collapse was speedy and complete. The breakdown followed at once upon Napoleon's first abdication, in April, 1814. The viceroy Beauharnais fled the country. Murat lost his kingdom, and when he made a desperate attempt to regain it he was captured and executed. The Pope resumed his sway at Rome, and the

was found that there remained, in all, ten Italian states—the Kingdom of Sardinia, Lombardo-Venetia, Parma, Modena, Lucca, Tuscany, Monaco, San Marino, the King-

dom of Naples, and the States

of the Church.

To the Kingdom of Sardinia, reconstituted under Victor Emmanuel I, France retroceded Nice and Savoy, and to it was added the territory of Genoa. Lombardo-Venetia, comprising the Duchy of Milan and all the continental possessions of the former Venetian Republic, including Istria and



THE PALAZZO VECCHIO, FLORENCE, THE SEAT OF THE OLD REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT AND LATER OF THE MEDICI—THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENT MET HERE FROM 1865 TO 1869

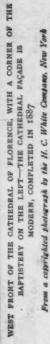
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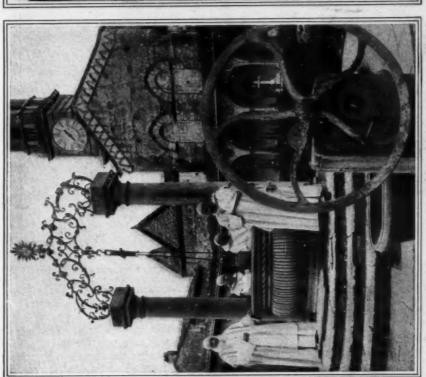
dukes and princelets came tripping back to their thrones.

A general readjustment of Italian affairs was now made by the sovereigns and diplomats assembled at the Congress of Vienna; and the work was performed with quite as small regard for the interests or wishes of the Italian people as Napoleon himself had exhibited. When, in 1815, the Congress completed its self-imposed task, it

Dalmatia, was given into the possession of Austria. Tuscany was restored to the Grand Duke Ferdinand III of Hapsburg-Lorraine. The Duchy of Modena fell again to Francis IV, son of the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria. Parma and Piacenza were assigned to Marie Louise, daugher of the Austrian emperor and second wife of Napoleon. The Duchy of Lucca went to Maria Louisa of Bourbon-Parma.







THE CLOISTER COURT OF THE CERTOSA DI VAL D'EMA, A GREAT CARTHUSIAN MONASTERY NEAR FLORENCE, ONE OF THE MANY MONASTERIES SUPPRESSED BY THE PRESENT ITALIAN GOVERNMENT

From a cospytéric saciografa de Underwood & Underwood, New York

In the south Ferdinand IV of Naples, restored to all of his former possessions, was recognized under the new title of Ferdinand I, King of the Two Sicilies. And, are obvious. The first is that the country was devoid of political unity, being not a nation, but, as Metternich declared, merely a "geographical expression." The second



THE MAIN (EASTERN) FAÇADE OF ST. PETER'S, ROME, THE LARGEST CHURCH IN THE WORLD, AND THE BURIAL-PLACE OF MANY SAINTS, SOVEREIGNS, AND POPES—IN THE FOREGROUND IS AN ANCIENT OBELISK FROM EGYPT

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finally, Pope Pius VII, long held a prisoner by Napoleon at Fontainebleau, recovered the whole of the dominion which formerly belonged to the Holy See.

Two facts concerning the Italy of 1815

is that the preponderance of Austria in the peninsula was now scarcely less thoroughgoing than that of the French in Napoleon's time. Lombardo-Venetia Austria possessed outright; Tuscany, Modena, and Parma



A ROMAN CROWD CHEERING FOR THE KING AFTER ITALY'S RECENT DECLARATION OF WAR — THE BUILDING IS THE QUIRINAL PALACE, FORMERLY A PAPAL RESIDENCE, NOW THE ROMAN SEAT OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

From a copyrighted photograph by the International News Service, New York



ONE OF THE COURTYARDS OF THE MUSEO DELLE TERME, ROME—THIS HUGE BUILDING WAS ORIGINALLY THE BATHS OF THE EMPEROR DIOCLETIAN; MICHELANGELO REBUILT PART OF IT
AS A MONASTERY, AND IT NOW CONTAINS A MUSEUM OF ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

were ruled by Austrian princes or princesses; Ferdinand of Naples was an Austrian satellite; while even Victor Emmanuel of Piedmont — the only important native sovereign, aside from the Pope, in the country—was pledged to a perpetual Austrian alliance. Small wonder that Italian patriots of the ensuing generation should have felt that the great essential of Italy's salvation was the expulsion of the power of Austria!

"Italy," wrote Napoleon some years after his banishment to St. Helena, "bounded by her natural frontiers, is destined to form a great and powerful nation. Italy is one nation; unity of language, customs, literature, must, within a period more or less distant, unite her inhabitants under a single government. And, without the slightest doubt, Rome will be chosen by the Italians as their capital."

At the time when this prophecy was written, the unification of Italy seemed in the highest degree improbable. It was, none the less, impending, and to it Napoleon himself really contributed in no unimportant measure.

In the words of a recent writer, "the brutalities of Austria's whitecoats in the north, the unintelligent repression then characteristic of the house of Savoy, the petty spite of the Duke of Modena, the medieval obscurantism of Pope and cardinals in the middle of the peninsula, and the clownish excesses of Ferdinand in the south, could not blot out from the minds of the Italians the recollection of the benefits derived from the just laws, vigorous administration, and enlightened aims of the great emperor. The hard but salutary training which they had undergone at his hands had taught them that they were the equals of the northern races both in the council-chamber and on the field of battle. It had further revealed to them that truth which, once grasped, could never be forgotten—that, despite differences of climate, character, and speech, they were in all essentials a nation."

In short, it is not too much to say that Napoleon sowed the seeds of Italian unity. For three decades after 1815 the will of Austria was supreme from Venice to Naples; and behind Austria was the conservatism of the ruling classes of Europe, abhorring revolution and discountenancing the slightest manifestations of liberalism. There was not in Italy one government which was not of the absolutist type. No state had a constitution, a parliament, or



MAP OF ITALY IN 1796, WHEN THE COUNTRY WAS DIVIDED INTO A DOZEN PETTY STATES, NEARLY ALL OF THEM RULED OR DOMINATED BY FOREIGNERS



MAP OF ITALY IN 1799, WHEN NAPOLEON HAD REORGANIZED MOST OF ITS TERRITORY INTO THE CISALPINE, LIGURIAN, ROMAN, AND PARTHENOPEAN REPUBLICS

any vestige of popular political procedure. In Lombardo-Venetia the French laws and reforms were abrogated, the people were instructed to forget that they were Italians and to consider themselves Austrians, and even Dante was "edited" that he might be read with safety.

In the Papal States the work of the French was largely undone. Even vaccination and gas illumination, introduced from Paris, were prohibited as savoring too much of revolutionary influence.

In Piedmont, too, the reaction was complete. The uprooting of French plants in

the botanical gardens of Turin and the smashing of French furniture in the royal palaces were but the more ridiculous aspects of an autocratic revival which extended to the most fundamental features of the state.

In Naples, where "civil institutions had advanced four centuries in the nine years

of French rule," the reaction was less drastic; but the restored government was hopelessly autocratic, corrupt, and oppressive.

lessly autocratic, corrupt, and oppressive.

Everywhere the policies of the princes made enemies of the enlightened and progressive elements and inspired deep discontent among the masses. Everywhere the



MAP OF ITALY IN 1806, WHEN ITS LEADING STATES WERE THE KINGDOM OF ITALY. WITH NAPOLEON AS KING, AND THE KINGDOM OF NAPLES, RULED BY JOSEPH BONAPARTE AND LATER BY MURAT

new ideas and aspirations fermented, under the surface; while malcontents by the thousands joined the Carbonari, or "Charcoal-Burners," and plotted for freedom and for constitutions.

In 1820 there came as a spark to the tinder the news of a revolution in Spain which had led to the promulgation of a liberal constitution. In Naples, where the Carbonari were best organized, a military insurrection assumed such proportions that King Ferdinand deemed it wise to make concessions. Professing that he would have granted a constitution earlier had he been aware that one was desired, he proclaimed an instrument of government which was



MAP OF ITALY IN 1810, AT THE HEIGHT OF NAPOLEON'S POWER, WHEN TUSCANY, ROME, AND ILLYRIA WERE ANNEXED TO FRANCE



MAP SHOWING THE STATES INTO WHICH ITALY WAS DIVIDED BY THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA (1815), AND THEIR INCORPORATION INTO THE MODERN KINGDOM OF ITALY (1859-1870)

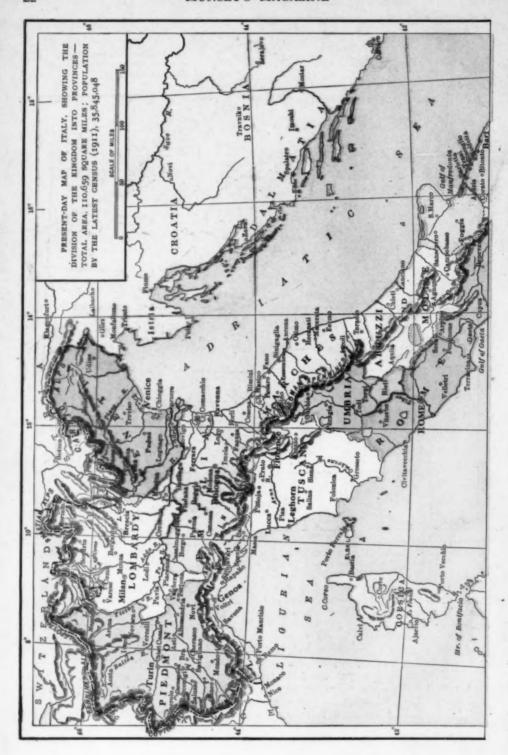
identical with the Spanish, and made it appear that he was not one whit less enthusiastic for it than were the revolutionists themselves.

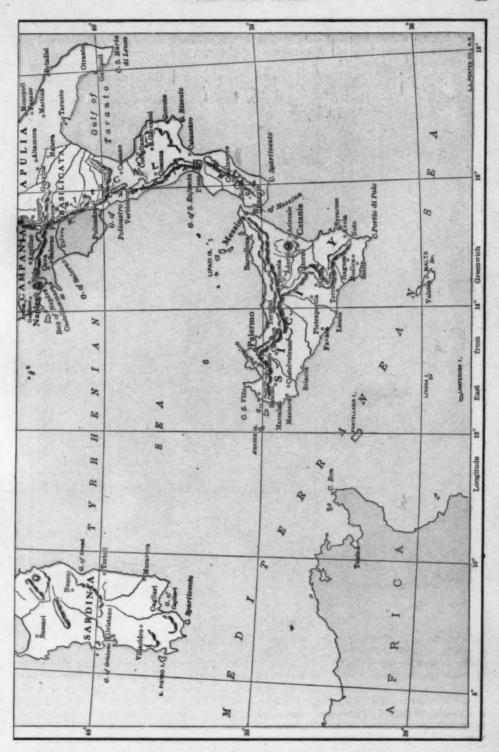
In 1821 revolution broke out in Piedmont. After King Victor Emmanuel had abdicated in favor of his brother, Charles Albert, a temporary regent conceded to the people a replica of the Spanish fundamental law. In both Naples and Piedmont, however, the liberal movement failed completely. The reformers proved to be deficient in unity of purpose, and when, un-

der the authorization of the powers, Austria intervened, every gleam of constitutionalism was promptly snuffed out.

Similarly, in 1831-1832 there was in Modena, Parma, and the Papal States widespread insurrection, and with rather more evidence of a growing national spirit; but again, with the assistance of a few thousand Austrian bayonets, the outbreaks were suppressed.

The reverses of these earlier years were disappointing, but not disheartening. To patriots of larger vision they indicated, not





that liberalism and nationality were for Italy forever impossible, but simply that the machinery and methods hitherto employed were inadequate.

The uprisings of 1820-1832 were purely

be stirred to a new enthusiasm, inspired with a larger hope, and encouraged by a broader vision.

The creation of this new universal mental state was the task of the leaders of



THE FAMOUS EQUESTRIAN BRONZE STATUE OF THE EMPEROR MARCUS AURELIUS, WHICH STANDS IN FRONT OF THE PALAZZO DEL SENATORE, IN ROME, NOW USED AS THE SEAT OF THE CITY GOVERNMENT

From a copyrighted photograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York

local, and only small groups of soldiery and members of the Carbonari took part in them. It was clear that such a basis was altogether too narrow—that there must be a grand concerted movement, founded upon a common aspiration and working toward some large and clearly conceived end. This meant that the mass of Italians must

Italian liberalism in the decade and a halffollowing the collapse in Piedmont in 1831.

Foremost among these leaders was the man who, even as Cavour was the statesman and Garibaldi the soldier of the cause, was its prophet, Giuseppe Mazzini. As early as 1821, when but sixteen years of age, Mazzini became conscious of his life-



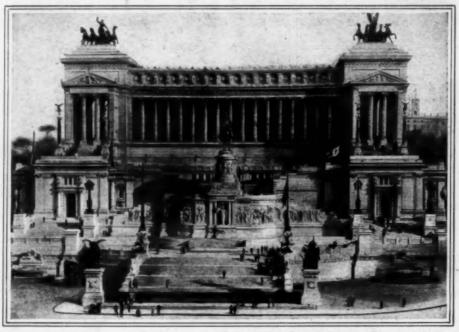
THE GRAVE OF PIUS IX, THE LAST POPE TO HOLD THE TEMPORAL SOVEREIGNTY. IN THE CHURCH OF SAN LORENZO FUORI LE MURA (ST. LAWRENCE OUTSIDE THE WALLS), ROME From a copyrighted thotograph by the H. C. White Company, New York

The cardinal proposition of Mazzini was that, as a con-

tionalistic ambition.



THE PALAZZO DI GIUSTIZIA, OR ROYAL LAW-COURTS, THE FINEST AND SHOWIEST OF THE NEW ITALIAN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS IN ROME—IT IS DECORATED WITH STATUES OF ANCIENT AND MODERN ITALIAN JURISTS



THE HUGE NATIONAL MONUMENT TO VICTOR EMMANUEL II, THE FIRST KING OF UNITED ITALY, WHICH OCCUPIES ONE END OF THE CAPITOLINE HILL IN ROME, AND WHICH IS NOW ALMOST COMPLETED AFTER THIRTY-ONE YEARS' WORK

dition precedent to all liberalization and nationalization, the Austrian power in Italy must be exterminated. Mazzini believed confidently that the Austrians could be driven out, and it is a clear proof of his greatness that he succeeded in bringing a majority of his countrymen to the same conviction.

unified republic as the most fitting organization for a state where sovereignty resides in the people. D'Azeglio advocated a monarchy, to be vested in the King of Sardinia. The Piedmontese priest Gioberti contended for a federation of Italian states under the presidency of the Pope. Still others took the rather sensible view



THE PANTHEON, ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS ANCIENT MONUMENTS OF ROME, WHICH DATES FROM
THE REIGN OF THE EMPEROR AUGUSTUS, AND IS NOW THE BURIALPLACE OF THE KINGS OF ITALY

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"The one thing wanting to twenty millions of Italians, desirous of emancipating themselves," he declared, "is not power, but faith"—faith in their own ability to win their independence and to maintain a strong and dignified nationality.

Upon the most suitable form of government for the Italians to adopt, once they had achieved independence and unity, there developed sharp differences of opinion. Mazzini himself strongly favored a that until independence and union should have been realized, it was futile to attempt to settle the question of political forms.

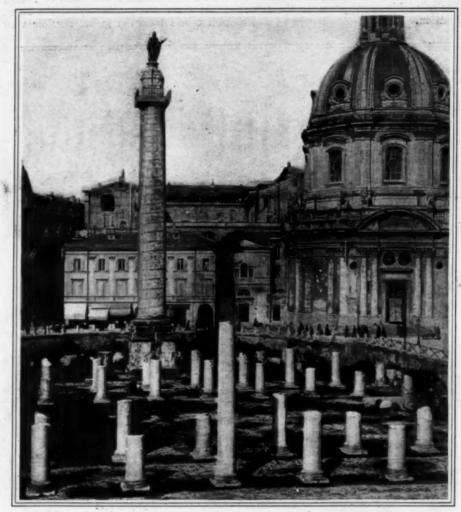
Out of this fermentation of ideas grew a vigorous spirit of unrest, of aspiration, and of determination. Discussion urged on action, and by 1845 there had been created a general state of mind which held not only that Austrian influence must be eliminated but that the Italians could, if they would, eliminate it without aid or permission from

any outside power. Charles Albert of Piedmont supplied the watchword in the declaration "Italia farà da se"—Italy will do it alone, or will act for herself.

In 1846 fresh impetus was supplied by

mont, and other states became reformers also. National feeling was ebullient.

"If Providence sends us a war of Italian independence," declared Charles Albert, "I will mount my horse with my sons.



TRAJAN'S COLUMN (NOW CROWNED BY A STATUE OF ST. PETER) AND THE SCANTY RUINS OF TRAJAN'S FORUM, EXCAVATED BY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT IN 1812, WHILE ROME WAS ANNEXED TO FRANCE

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the accession of a liberal-minded Pope, Piux IX, chosen by the anti-Austrian members of the conclave. The new pontiff began auspiciously by challenging the Austrian occupation of Ferrara and by instituting important reforms within his dominions. The princes of Tuscany, Pied-

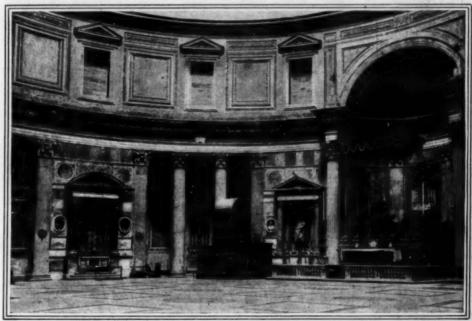
V/hat a glorious day it will be in which we can raise the cry of a war for the independence of Italy!"

Two years later the hour of Italian opportunity seemed to have struck. Revolution was in the air. At Paris Louis Philippe was being overthrown and the Sec-



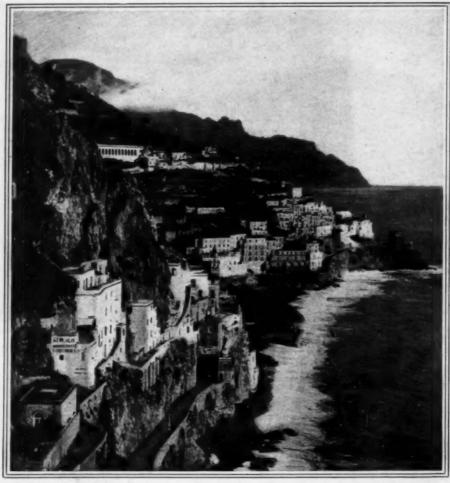
THE VATICAN, FROM THE SQUARE OF ST. PETER'S, ROME — AT THIS END OF THE VAST PAPAL PALACE ARE THE LIVING APARTMENTS OF THE POPE, WHO STILL HOLDS SOVEREIGNTY IN THE VATICAN PRECINCTS

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THE INTERIOR OF THE PANTHEON—IN THIS ANCIENT ROUND TEMPLE, UNDER THE GREAT DOME BUILT BY THE EMPEROR HADRIAN, LIE ITALY'S TWO DEAD KINGS, VICTOR EMMANUEL II AND HUMBERT I

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THE OLD CITY OF AMALFI, ONCE A MEDITERRANEAN SEA-POWER, ON THE PICTURESQUE COAST OF THE BAY OF SALERNO

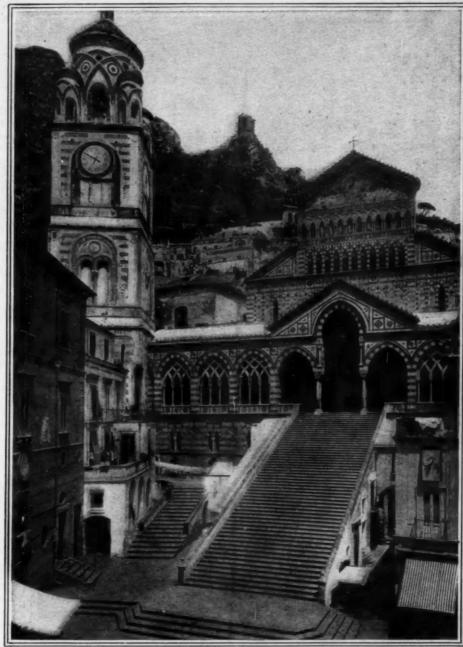
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ond Republic proclaimed. Austria was in the throes of dismemberment; Metternich's system was in collapse, and its author was an exile.

Even before the coming of the electrifying news from Paris and Vienna, the Italians were astir. In January, revolution broke out in Naples, and within a month the king was obliged to yield to the public demand for a constitution. In February a constitution was granted in Tuscany. At Turin the king announced his readiness to bestow upon his people a full-fledged representative system of government, and on March 4 there was promulgated a remarkable instrument — the

statuto fondamentale del regno, or basic law of the kingdom, modeled on the amended French charter of 1830—which, with absolutely no change of text, survives to the present day as the constitution of the Italian kingdom. Ten days later the Pope also granted his subjects a constitution.

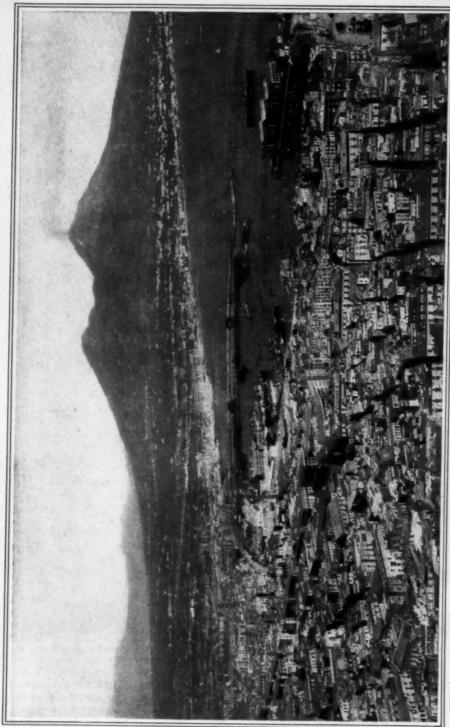
Accompanying these events was a widespread movement for independence from Austria. Milan rose in insurrection and expelled the Austrian troops; Venice declared for the restoration of the ancient republic; Charles Albert of Piedmont made good his pledge and took the field against the hated foreigner. Under the pressure of popular demand, the Pope and the King



THE CATHEDRAL OF AMALFI, A CURIOUS BUILDING PARTLY SARACENIC IN STYLE, POSSESSING ELEVENTH-CENTURY BRONZE DOORS BROUGHT FROM CONSTANTINOPLE

of Naples sent troops to aid in the penin-sula's liberation. All Italy seemed united in a nationalistic enterprise. Following a breach between the Pope and the Roman parliament, Pius IX fled from the Eternal City, and Rome was proclaimed a republic. But again the patriots were doomed to disappointment. Under the leadership of

parliament, Pius IX fled from the Eternal



VIEW OF NAPLES, WITH PART OF THE HARBOR AND BAY, AND VESUVIUS IN THE DISTANCE—NAPLES, FORMERLY THE CAPITAL OF THE KINGDOM OF THAT NAME, IS THE MOST POPULOUS CITY OF ITALY, HAVING 678,031 INHABITANTS BY THE LATEST CENSUS

Radetzky, then eighty-two years of age, the Austrians clung desperately to their strong-holds on the Adige and the Mincio, and in the end beat back the largest Italian armies that could be sent against them. Charles Albert was defeated at Custozza, and at Novara his troops were utterly routed.

The King of Naples took the first opportunity of withdrawing from the war, and revoked the constitution he had granted. French bayonets suppressed the republic at Rome and restored the Pope to his temporal power. One after another of the insurrectionary states was crushed; Austrian dominance was restored as before; constitutionalism gave way to absolutism; and the liberals, disunited and disheart-

ened, were driven to cover.

Only in Piedmont, whose sovereign, after the bitter defeat at Novara, had abdicated in favor of his son, Victor Emmanuel II, was there left any semblance of political independence or civil liberty. To all inducements to abrogate the constitution which his father had granted, Victor Emmanuel continued deaf, and the logic of the situation began to point unmistakably to the Sardinian king as the leader and the hope of the patriotic cause,

After 1848 the building of the Italian nation becomes, indeed, essentially a story of Piedmontese planning, organization, conquest, and expansion. Victor Emmanuel II, honest and liberal, was not a statesman of the highest rank, but he had the wisdom to discern and utilize the genius of one of the most remarkable ministers in the history of modern Europe, Count Camillo di Cavour. And Cavour became quite as truly the maker of united Italy as was

Bismarck the maker of imperial Germany. Cavour, born in 1810, belonged to the nobility of Piedmont, and was educated for the army. A military career was not, however, to his taste, and he lived for many years as a country gentleman, interested mainly in the introduction of scientific processes of agriculture. He visited England, studied the institutions of that country, and wrote voluminously upon social and economic subjects.

He thought deeply upon the problem of Italian unification, and in 1847 he founded a newspaper, the Risorgimento, dedicated to Italian "independence, union, and reform." He was among those who demanded of Charles Albert a constitution in 1848. He was elected to the first Sardinian par-

liament; he was taken into the cabinet in 1850, and in 1852 he was made prime minister. Of sober, practical temper and of consummate diplomatic and administrative ability, he easily became the statesman of Italian unification.

The fundamental purpose of both king and premier was to raise Piedmont as a state to such a position that she should be able to enlist the support of all Italians and lead them in the winning of independence and nationality. This meant internal reform; and the early years of the ministry witnessed remarkable social betterment and economic advancement.

It meant also the attaining of international prestige; and in 1854-1855 Sardinia took vigorous part in the Crimean War as an ally of France and England—not because she had any real quarrel with Russia, but because in this way she could gain a recognized place among the nations and achieve the right to be represented in the councils by which the terms of peace should be determined. The game was a bold one, but it succeeded, and the prominent part which Cavour was enabled to play in the Congress of Paris, in 1856, vindicated his policy completely.

"There is only one diplomatist in Europe," declared Metternich, now in retirement, "and unfortunately he is against us;

it is M. de Cavour."

In 1855 Cavour signed an offensive and defensive alliance with France, and in 1859 Piedmont, with the connivance of her ally, precipitated war with Austria. According to an understanding arrived at by Cavour and the Emperor Napoleon III at Plombières in 1858, Austria was to be expelled absolutely from Italian soil; Lombardo-Venetia, the smaller duchies of the north, and some of the papal lands were to be apnexed to Piedmont, the whole to comprise a Kingdom of Upper Italy; Umbria and Tuscany were to be erected into a Kingdom of Central Italy; the Pope was to retain Rome, and Ferdinand, Naples; and the four states thus constituted were to be formed into an Italian confederation.

The war of 1859 was brief. The allies won two notable victories, at Magenta and Solferino; Milan was occupied, and Lombardy was overrun. Then, suddenly, and without consulting his ally, Napoleon entered into an armistice with the enemy.

The Italians were cruelly disappointed, and Cavour, in a fit of disgust, sought to retire from office. Wiser counsel prevailed, and there was concluded a treaty of peace in accordance with which the whole of Lombardy was acquired by Piedmont.

The indirect gains from the war were yet greater. Aroused by the vigor and promise of Piedmontese leadership, a large portion of central Italy broke into revolt and declared for union with Victor Emmanuel's dominion. In September, 1859, four assemblies, representing the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, the Duchies of Modena and Parma, and the Romagna—the northern portion of the Papal States—met at Florence, Modena, Parma, and Bologna respectively, and declared unanimously for incorporation with Piedmont.

In March, 1860, the people of these districts voted overwhelmingly for annexation; and, under authority conferred by the Piedmontese parliament, Victor Emmanuel forthwith proclaimed the union of each with his kingdom. Within the space of a year the population of the dominion had been more than doubled, being now about half

of that of the entire peninsula.

With amazing rapidity Cavour's program was carried toward completion. The next great step was the conquest of the King-

dom of Naples.

Early in 1860 the Sicilians, rising in revolt, created an opportunity for the most daring of Italian leaders to undertake the most dramatic exploit recorded in the entire story of the country's unification. Garibaldi, two years younger than Mazzini and three years older than Cavour, was the soldier of the triumvirate. After a stormy career as sailor and refugee, which took him to South America and to New York. as well as to most countries of Europe, he became in 1859 the idol of the Italian soldiers in the war against Austria. In 1860 he volunteered to lead an expedition to the relief of the patriots in Sicily, promising to lay the whole of the Neapolitan kingdom at the feet of his sovereign.

The expedition of the "Thousand," the "Red Shirts," was secretly approved by Cavour and the king, although for diplomatic reasons it was not openly avowed. A daring and hazardous stroke, it resulted in the conquest, not only of Sicily, but of the continental Neapolitan lands as well—a kingdom of eleven million people.

This considerable area was annexed forthwith to the fast-growing Piedmontese state. And, although Garibaldi was restrained from effecting a conquest of Rome, Cavour did not scruple to add also Umbria and the Marches, leaving to the Pope only the Eternal City and a bit of territory im-

mediately surrounding it.

In January, 1861, general elections were held, and three weeks later there was convened at Turin a new and enlarged parliament, which, on March 18, proclaimed the united Kingdom of Italy. To the new territories was extended the statuto granted to Piedmont by Charles Albert thirteen years earlier; and Victor Emmanuel II was acknowledged "by the grace of God and the will of the nation, King of Italy." Garibaldi, refusing all rewards and honors, and with only a little money and a bag of seedbeans for his farm, sailed away to his tiny island of Caprera.

A new kingdom, comprising a population of about twenty-two millions, had arisen in a period of eighteen months, and now took its place among the powers of

Europe.

Not all of the Italian lands, however, were as yet included in it. Venetia, still Austrian, was outside; so was the Patrimony of St. Peter. It was the task of the ensuing decade to bring these in. Venetia was acquired in direct consequence of Italy's alliance with Prussia against Austria in the war of 1866. The acquisition of the Roman territory was made possible four years later by the exigencies of the

Franco-German War.

It had long been the ardent desire of the Italian patriots to have Rome, with its historic monuments and its glorious traditions, as the capital of their kingdom. In 1870. when the French government was forced to withdraw the garrison which it had maintained there since 1850, the opportunity was seized to follow up fruitless diplomacy with military demonstrations. On September 20 the royal troops, commanded by General Cadorna, forced an entrance into the city, and the Pope-the same Pius IX who had gained reputation as a reformer more than two decades earlier-was compelled to capitulate. By almost unanimous vote the people declared for union with the Italian kingdom, and the annexation was promptly consummated. By an act of February 3, 1871, the capital—already, in 1865, transferred from Turin to Florencewas removed to Rome.

In the making of modern Italy the bringing of the Italian lands under a common government was but a first step. It remained to weld into one people Venetians, Sicilians, Romans, Tuscans, Piedmontese, and many other groups differing in traditions, institutions, and temperaments.

"We have united Italy," said D'Azeglio;

" now let us unite the Italians."

"Italy is united and free," declared Victor Emmanuel; "it remains for us henceforth to make her great and happy."

The problem thus clearly conceived was attacked with determination. It was not one to be solved in a day. For more than forty years Italian statesmen have been working at it. There have been notable achievements and there have been distressing failures; but on the whole there has been very substantial progress.

The country has attained stable and enlightened government. It has gained enormously in national solidarity and spirit. Although not rich, it has increased vastly in industry, trade, and resources. In literature, art, and music it is eminent, and in many branches of learning it stands well

to the front.

The form of government is that of a constitutional monarchy. On paper, the powers of the crown are extensive; in reality, these powers are exercised, as are the powers of the sovereign in England, by ministers who are responsible, not to the king, but to Parliament. No one of the three monarchs of united Italy — Victor Emmanuel II, Humbert I, and Victor Emmanuel III—has ever sought to establish anything in the nature of personal government.

The reigning family is extremely popular. The present king, though a man of very quiet tastes, has the reputation of being the most perfect gentleman on a European throne to-day; and Queen Helena, a Montenegrin princess, is equally a favorite with

her adopted people.

One of the principal problems of the past forty years has been that of the franchise. The Senate, or upper house of parliament, is composed of members appointed for life by the king. But the Chamber of Deputies is composed of members—now five hundred and eight in number—elected in singlemember districts by the people. Under the original electoral law of 1860 the franchise was restricted to property-holders who had attained the age of twenty-five, who were able to read and write, and who paid an annual tax of at least forty lire.

Under this system less than two and one-

half per cent of the population possessed the right to vote. The prevalence of illiteracy and of poverty seemed, to the founders of the kingdom, to preclude the possibility of a more liberal arrangement.

In 1882 changes were introduced which increased the number of voters threefold; and finally, in 1912, after prolonged discussion, there was enacted a great electoral law by which the principle of manhood suffrage was adopted, with slight limitations, and the number of voters was increased to more than eight millions. In view of the high proportion of illiterates thus enfranchised, the habitual indifference of most of the Italian electorate, and the somewhat unsatisfactory state of the kingdom's politics, this step was viewed with apprehension by many persons, both in and out of Italy. But the parliamentary elections of 1913 passed without revealing any undesirable effects.

Italy differs from other nations in containing what is essentially a state within a state. The capital of the kingdom is likewise the capital of the Catholic world—the seat of an ancient and powerful sovereignty not only independent of the Italian government but antagonistic to it.

Pope Pius IX refused absolutely to acquiesce in the loss of his remaining temporal dominion in 1870. In 1871, when the government of the kingdom promulgated a fundamental statute, the Law of Papal Guarantees, intended to regulate the new relations between the two powers, the instrument received neither assent nor rec-

ognition from the Vatican.

As a one-sided contract, rather than the mutual agreement which it was designed to be, the law remains to this day in operation and without change. It enumerates and defines the privileges of the Pope as an essentially independent prince. It recognizes his right to maintain separate diplomatic and postal systems. It insures permanent possession of the Vatican and Lateran palaces, with all buildings, museums, libraries, and gardens appertaining thereto-including the church of St. Peter's -together with the villa at Castel Gandolfo, in the Alban Hills; all to be exempt from taxation and from visitation by royal agents without papal consent. It stipulates the payment to the Pope of a sum equivalent to about six hundred thousand dollars a year from the treasury of the kingdom, in lieu of revenues lost by the confiscation of the papal lands. And it guarantees him the utmost freedom in the

exercise of his spiritual functions.

None of these arrangements have ever received the sanction of the Vatican. Pius IX flatly refused to accept them; Leo XIII and Piux X maintained the same attitude; and although it has been intimated that the present pontiff, Benedict XV, is more disposed to a policy of reconciliation, it is still true that the only recognition which is accorded the Quirinal by the Vatican is of a purely passive and involuntary character.

The Pope persists in regarding himself as "the prisoner of the Vatican." He will not so much as set foot outside the petty domain which has been assigned to him, because his doing so might be construed as a recognition of the legality of Italian authority within the Eternal City. Not a penny of the annuity provided for in 1871 has been accepted. The account is carried faithfully on the books of the government; but every five years the accrued sums are turned to the government's uses.

In Italy, as in France, political parties are numerous, and their constituencies are subject to rapid and bewildering changes. In the past, parties have been largely personal followings, and it is still true that in no country of Europe does personal leadership more largely determine party alinements. There is, furthermore, no really conservative party; which means that the existing party groups differ one from another only in degree of liberalism.

The continued growth of socialism in the kingdom, however, is having some important effects. For one thing, it is bringing into existence for the first time a party with a stable membership, with a definite and permanent program, and with machinery resembling the party machinery of France,

England, and other countries.

In the second place, it is forcing upon the Vatican a policy of compromise in relation to politics. In 1883 Leo XIII declared it "inexpedient" that Catholics should recognize the state by voting at parliamentary elections, and in 1895 he expressly prohibited what previously had been pronounced simply inexpedient. In 1905, however, Pius X, aroused by the gains of the socialists in the parliamentary elections of the preceding year, issued an encyclical whereby the ban, under conditions, was relaxed. When necessary to prevent the triumph of the enemies of society

and religion, as socialists are considered by the Vatican, Catholics may not only vote at parliamentary elections but even become candidates for seats.

The effect has been to increase considerably the number of Catholic voters. On the other hand, the anticlerical spirit has been quickened, and it would not be surprising if it should be found that by providing the radicals with a solidifying issue the Vatican

radicals with a solidifying issue the Vatican has unwittingly rendered a service to thevery elements against which it has authorized its adherents to wage relentless war.

The cardinal facts of Italy's position and policy as a nation among nations, from 1870 to the outbreak of the present war, are two—her affiliation with Germany and Austria - Hungary in the Triple Alliance, and her ambition to become a world-power of the first order, with a great navy, extended colonial dominions, and an influential voice in international affairs.

A common Latin civilization, a kindred tongue, the Napoleonic tradition, mutual dislike of Austria, and the amenities of social intercouse, naturally inclined Italy in the early years of the united kingdom, as they incline her to-day, toward France. Circumstances, however, for a time overbore this predilection. The threats of the French to restore the Pope to his temporal possessions, and the seizure of Tunis by France in the teeth of solemn promises, threw Italy unreservedly into the arms of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

The treaty by which the alliance already existing between the two northern powers was converted, by the accession of Italy, into the Triple Alliance was signed in May, 1882. The original agreement was for five years, but at irregular intervals thereafter the arrangement was renewed, the fourth

and last occasion being in 1912.

From every point of view the Triplice, as Italians call it, was unnatural and of dubious value to their interests, and it cannot be said to have been popular. It was regarded as a guarantee of peace, and it gave Italy a recognized position among the nations; but it involved a forced friendship with the hated Austrians, and it plunged the country into expenditure and indebtedness for military and naval projects out of all proportion to resources or needs.

In time Italian opinion abandoned the idea that France had any hostile intent. After a decade of suspicion and recrimination, relations with the great Latin republic became quite as friendly as with Italy's nominal allies, and considerably more sincere. With Great Britain, too, there has always been the best of understandings. Thus Italy's position as a member of the Triplice was an anomaly long before the events which, within the past year, have led to the entrance of Italy into the present war on the side of Great Britain, France, and Russia.

The aspiration of Italy to become a colonial power is to be attributed in part to the imperialistic influence of her former allies, in part to the outcropping of the natural ambition of a newly risen and densely populated state in an age when colonial possessions have been deemed

requisite to national prestige.

At the Congress of Berlin, in 1878, Bismarck suggested to Italy the seizure of Tunis as the nearest and most natural field for colonial expansion. The suggestion, unheeded by the Italians, was acted upon by the French. This stung the pride and aroused the ambition of the Italians, and during the years 1881-1885 steps were taken to enter actively, as Germany was also doing, the race for colonial dominion.

Unoccupied territory at this late day was limited, and the field selected was that portion of eastern Africa adjacent to the upper Red Sea. In 1885 Massowa, a fever-stricken port near the Abyssinian border, was seized, and in succeeding years there was marked off and partially occupied a fairly extended subject territory to which

was given the name of Eritrea.

The dream of wide expansion in this region was soon shattered. Few Italians could be induced to migrate to the new possession, and the colony was subject to attack by powerful and hostile neighboring princes. Finally, in 1896, when Premier Crispi was making a bold effort to extend the colony's boundaries, an Italian army was annihilated in battle at Adowa and the entire project broke down. A reduced area was retained, and south of the Gulf of Aden, in the coastal territory of Somaliland, a protectorate was subsequently acquired; but to the present day the Italian possessions in eastern Africa have yielded little but danger and disaster.

A far more satisfactory achievement was the conquest of Tripoli in the Turkish war of 1911-1912. By that contest there was gained a stretch of territory aggregating twice the area of Italy itself; and while large portions of the new lands are desert, there is every reason to expect that the more favored coast districts will become the seat of a flourishing Italian civilization.

The Turkish war also had the effect of leaving Italy in possession of some of the islands of the Ægean Sea and increasing the nation's hold upon the sphere of influence which she had marked out for herself

in southwestern Asia Minor.

The phase of Italian expansion of largest current interest is the effort which is being made in the present war to gain possession of "Italia Irredenta"—the "unredeemed" lands lying in the Alps and about the Adriatic Sea. These are the territories which, although inhabited very largely by Italians, were not regained from Austria at the time of the conquests of

1859 and 1866.

They remain under Austrian sovereignty, and in years past every effort has been made to wean the people from their Italian connections and make of them loyal Austrian subjects. The effort has been almost entirely unsuccessful, however. The Trentino—the tongue of Austrian land projecting southward along the Adige River almost to Verona—is quite as Italian as is Venice. Trieste, the one great seaport of Austria, is likewise strongly Italian.

The Dalmatian coast also comes within the scope of the ambition of many of the expansionists, although with doubtful justice, because only a small fraction of its population is really Italian. But, barring an absolute victory of Germany and her allies, the war may be expected to bring Italy some important and long-coveted

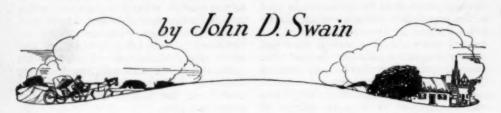
territory.

The future of Italy is big with promise. The nation has developed self-respect, and in late years she has compelled other powers, as never before, to respect her. From all sides she was wooed, long before there arose the remarkable rivalry for her favor incident to the present conflagration. National feeling has been steadily rising; public enlightenment has been increasing; industry and wealth have been growing; the state of politics has been improving.

From the heterogeneous and crude materials of a hundred, or even sixty, years ago there has been created a nationality of such dignity and strength as to make the achievement appear indeed a modern

miracle.

# The Broken Pitcher



ARSTAIRS rode in austere silence over the dunes of Brittany. His driver asked no questions, and evinced no curiosity. The peasant, as a rule, expects your confidences, and freely offers his own. The Breton variety is peculiar; his mind, to all appearances, a slate wiped clean.

It meant nothing to him that his fare, a handsome man with snowy mustache and the lean angularity which so often becomes an Englishman, had alighted at the little railway-station where even Frenchmen seldom paused, and asked to be driven to the inn of the Poisson d'Or, unknown to Baedeker. He was to receive five francs for the trip; it was sufficient. All men—save Bretons—were crazy anyhow; what would you?

As for Carstairs, a taciturn man even among Englishmen, it was half a century—fifty years to a day—since he had traversed these melancholy reaches to the scene of the one adventure of his well-ordered life—an episode which had, in fact, colored and altered his entire subsequent career.

Then, as now, he had journeyed down in a jerky little train which knew nothing of vitesse, whether grande or petite, with drovers, buyers of fruit and vegetables, a few marketwomen returning from the sleepy little terminal city to their homes, and a smattering of fishermen bound for their port, and loaded with dunnage.

Nothing had changed, it seemed. The people's faces, the strange patois of their frugal remarks, were the same. Over the

wide stretches of sand there were the same smells; the faint perfume of little sea flowers basking in the hot sun, the stronger aroma of apple-blooms, now, as then, in full flower; over all, the salty tang of the sea, visible whenever the sturdy vehicle surmounted a hillock of sand, bound together by coarse sea-grass.

Taste in art changes from generation to generation. The passion for Rogers groups rages, and disappears with green woolen picture-cords and red plush mats for framed chromos. A quaint old Flemish or Italian master sleeps for centuries, is resurrected, and becomes famous overnight.

It has long been fashionable to smile tolerantly at Guido Reni, Carlo Dolci, and Greuze. But in the case of the latter, nearly every one has paused to bestow a sigh, or a smile, or both, on his little "Broken Pitcher." It may not be great art, but it is tender youth and beauty, the maiden just budding into the flower, the precious moment of life caught perfectly, and immortalized by one who knew.

Fifty years ago Carstairs, living easily in Paris, saw it, and saw it often, and came to love it. Had he not seen it, possibly he might not have bestowed more than an admiring glance at little Célestine Houbert. Had he not seen her, he would sooner have forgotten the painting. Seeing them both, he embarked on his adventure.

She was a *midinette*, which is much; but she was like the *cruche cassée*, the "Broken Pitcher," which was more. Almost, one might say, she was the "Broken Pitcher." Greuze might have used her for his model, and scarcely altered a brush-stroke, a glint of her hair, a wistful appeal from her eyes. Her face was neither merry nor sad, but just wondering, with the vague inward stirrings of warm, breathing life in its ever mysterious alchemy.

In a week they were married. He was twenty, she sixteen; both were orphans. There was no one to consult, no one to

object.

Carstairs possessed a moderate fortune, an ancient name; he was educated, but without genius or ambition. If his temperament prevented him from going high, it likewise protected him from falling low. Nature destined him to walk serenely in the sun, to take what he desired, but to desire nothing base; to live long and sedately, and be at the last buried in the great family crypt, with no high lights to make a biography worth while.

#### II

THEY were young, and it was June. The sun shone, crocuses were everywhere, the moon was at the full; such a setting renders bargaining superfluous, delay worse than silly. The contract was soon struck. Because she came from Brittany, and he had never been there, they selected it for their

honeymoon.

She hastily bought a few requisites. As the wife of Carstairs, she could not dress like a midinette; but she bought less than would have pleased him, although in her simple frocks she looked more than ever like the little maiden of Greuze. He placed a chain about her neck, a solitaire on her finger, for which latter extravagance she scolded him adorably in a mixture of Parisian and Breton idioms; and they set forth.

No one at the inn had expected them, or known them. She herself had been born, not in a town, but an isolated old farmhouse, long since occupied by strangers. They came here because it was the only public house whose name she could recall.

She had never seen it.

No surprise, no French volubility, greeted them. They dined; a poulet, roasted; a big crock of cider; the whitest of bread, the freshest of butter and eggs, Breton cheese, and coffee, with a dash of cognac in his. Afterward, they had strolled down to the sea, and had their bit of love-making, two healthy, contented children.

They bought a flopping fish from an old man who had just beached his sloop, and it was served for their supper, with a sauce whose origin was lost in antiquity. And this was all.

For the next morning, young Carstairs awakened alone in the great chamber to which they had been assigned—a chamber filled with mighty dressers, with shining brass candlesticks lighting them to the bed into which they needs must clamber, laughingly, by means of a little pair of steps, a fall from which seemed as perilous as one from a painter's scaffolding.

Outside, the sound of the flowing tide crept, mingled pleasantly with the gossip of ducks and fowls, and the scent of apple-blossoms. Unalarmed, Carstairs lazily breathed in the fresh morning air, the warm sunlight that streamed through the open window. Nothing could happen in such a place. Nothing ever would.

Stretching, yawning, contented, and a little hungry, his eyes, roaming the great room, caught sight of a near-by table on which were the candles of the night before. By them lay a sheet of paper with writing on it. Beside that were the solitaire ring and the little chain. The traveling-bag in which Célestine had packed her simple belongings, with room to spare, was set primly against the wall.

Wondering, he slipped from bed as one would drop from a high wall. Taking up the paper, he read, in the idiomatic French that sounded so quaint, and read still more

quaintly:

Farewell! I have gone, and you must not look for me, for it will be useless. I love you. There is no one else, and no harm threatens me. I am sorry, but I had to do it. I cannot explain, for you would not understand.

Your Celestine. .

And that was the end of the honeymoon. He dressed quickly, and made agitated inquiries of the old woman who conducted the inn, of her two loutish sons, and of the peasant woman with thick ankles and red hands who cooked deliciously, but never smiled. None could tell him anything whatsoever; no one had seen mademoiselle since she retired. The inn and the outbuildings were searched; there was no trace.

Other and more extended inquiries, long and persistently continued, yielded no more. No neighbor, no one at the little railroadstation, the local postman, the fishermen; she had simply vanished. And at last he was forced to depart, taking with him the gold chain and the ring, and one or two intimate possessions—her favorite blue hair-ribbon, her worn prayer-book, and, of course, the brief note she had left.

He paid the stolid landlady, and left a sum of money with her, and the address where he could always be reached if any trace, however slight, should ever be found.

#### TII

But the years went by, and no news came. Once in a while he had written, but without result. The old woman had died; the sons were conducting the inn. The apple crop had failed. Three fishing-smacks had been lost in the recent great gales; but of Célestine, nothing.

Gradually he came to think of her as dead. He did not forget her, but as far as possible he put her out of his mind, and ceased tormenting himself with futile con-

iecture.

His life was altered, of course. He was not of the type to pine away, or indulge in fine frenzies. He neither plunged into dissipation, nor sought refuge in bleak asceticism. But he could not marry; upon another wife, and possible children, he could not bestow the possible disaster of her return. Then again, he was a Catholic, and

held strict views upon divorce.

Hence his social existence had to be readjusted. He could not pay to the various charming women of his set any attentions that might enlist their affections or be misunderstood. He had no intimate to whom he cared to relate his experience. He lived as a man's man; hunting and fishing wherever the fishing and hunting were good; sailing strange seas, idling away long days in many clubs in many cities; rather bored, but neither cynical nor pessimistic, and gradually and gracefully growing old.

And now, for no reason that he could give, he had been seized by an impulse to revisit the inn of the Poisson d'Or. Partly, perhaps, because it was a sort of wedding anniversary; more, because he had done everything else that he cared to do, and

this offered a change.

For any reason, or none, he was crawling over the Breton sands, drawing nearer and nearer to the ancient inn; and his mind was reconstructing the short and simple details that memory had left him. A few brief meetings in Paris; a café chantant

on Montmartre; a Sunday at Auteuil; the marriage in the ancient church of St. Leu; and the moonlight night at the Poisson d'Or. It was so little that he could almost literally recall every sentence they had exchanged.

And now he rode alone, with the burden of fifty years added. All else, even to the

apple-blooms, was as then.

Silently, even their wheels making no sound in the deep, clean sand, they followed the winding road to the inn. Toward noon its gray walls and red roof caught his eye, with the deep blue sea behind, and the gulls swinging overhead.

Leaving his silent driver at the crossroad, and directing him to wait for him at the inn, Carstairs walked down to the beach where so long ago he had strolled with

Célestine.

Nothing had changed. An aged fisherman, who might well be the selfsame one with whom they had bartered, offered him, in a quavering voice, an uneasily flopping fish. He retraced his steps to the Poisson d'Or.

The driver was placidly sleeping beneath an apple-tree while his horse cropped the sweet grass in the yard. No one noted Carstairs's approach; no one met him in the brick-paved hall. Sounds of rattling pans drew him on to the kitchen at the rear. At the great stove, a young peasant woman with thick ankles and red wrists was roasting a poulet, and watching a mighty pot-au-feu. She looked stolidly up on hearing his steps.

"I was here many years ago, mademoiselle," he explained. "I have the fancy to see the apartment I then occupied."

He gave her a silver piece, and she nodded a brief thanks, wiping her hands on a coarse towel, preparatory to showing him up.

"It is unnecessary; I remember the way very well," he said; whereupon she re-

turned to her cooking.

Carstairs mounted slowly to the first floor, in a house apparently deserted save by the cook and himself. The door of the room he sought was open, the sun streaming in, bearing scent of apple-bloom and the sound of droning bees and contented fowls. The great bed was there in its corner, with spotless linen, and the same little pair of steps at its head; the big dressers, too, and the table with its brass candlesticks.

He had been curious to see if any emotion would be roused by this strange return after many years. There was none, save a vague regret, a dull wonder. Well, he had accomplished his sudden fancy, and there seemed no sense in prolonging his

stav.

As he turned to leave, there entered through the doorway an enormous black cat, on silent and padded feet, with nervously twitching tail and inscrutable green eyes which stared at him with indolent curiosity. And even as Carstairs returned his gaze, estimating his sleek weight, a voice from the stairs called:

"Michou! Michou!"

There are three notes in a woman's voice which are unmistakable in any language under the sun—her words to her lover, her baby, and her cat. Other notes are more open to conjecture.

The black cat was Michou. If proof were lacking, Michou's detached expression would have sufficed. His tail twitched, the black slits in his eyes widened; otherwise

he made no move.

Further calls resounded, coupled with Breton objurgations. Wooden shoes clattered up the stairs and down the hall. Carstairs waited.

#### IV

In the doorway appeared an old, old woman with the thick, wide, short petticoats, the crossed shawl, the odd cap of the Bretonnaise. Her face was like one of her own winter apples. Her eyes were piercing, her ankles thick and bony, her hands gnarled and unshapely, from hard work, or rheumatism, or both.

Why he should at once have known her, and she him, Carstairs could never guess. Resemblance to the "Broken Pitcher" there was none; rather, she suggested the broken trunk of a storm-plagued tree.

He removed his hat and bowed.

"Madame," he said—he tried to say "Célestine," but it was too utterly preposterous—"you are, then, here?"

"Oui, monsieur, I know always that some day you will come."

"Why?" he asked, mildly curious. She shrugged her bent shoulders.

"How can one say? But it was to be.
Me, I know it."

"Yes, madame, I came to take one more look at the Poisson d'Or before I die. I am an old man, and my time is short."

She nodded.

"I, too, am old; my burial linen lies for long in the chest. I am ready."

She gestured slightly toward one of the wooden chests — the one on which the Célestine of long ago had laid out her traveling-set.

"But why, madame, did you do it?" he asked. "I never expected to know; but now we meet again, pray indulge my curiosity. Surely I deserve that much!"

"C'est juste!" she agreed. "But monsieur can never be expected to understand. That is why I never told him. It is useless. We are of a different race."

Michou, having fulfilled his part, rose silently, and departed unnoticed. Célestine

continued:

"Monsieur, when you meet me, I am young, and pretty, and warm-blooded; but all the same, me, I am Bretonne to the bone. I think of this, too late, when we are on the train, and even when we walk on the beach, and above all that night, when I lie awake and smell the appleblooms, and hear the sea and the crickets. I was doing the impossible, monsieur. You were kind and good to me; you were rich; but sooner or later you shall tire of the little Breton peasant girl. Never am I anything else, in heart. Even Paris I hate. You shall take me to strange countries, and I shall talk with great people; but they are not my people, nor their ways my ways. And some day you are ashamed of me, and some pretty girl from your own people shall make the eyes at you, and you shall not love me any more, and we shall be wretched. And so, for your sake, and my own sake, I leave you. There was nothing else to do. But," she continued, "you are not Breton. You cannot understand!"

Carstairs stroked his white mustache, unable to tear from his mind the little maiden whom Greuze painted so long ago, and whom he had found alive. He roused

himself with an effort.

"In a way, I understand," he said. "But why did you not tell me? I would not

have held you against your will!"

"Ah, monsieur, you think so now, because your blood it has cooled, and time has healed. But then! Nenni! You would have teased me, and who knows? I might have yielded. I was afraid, monsieur, afraid of you, and afraid of my own self. It was better that I should go."

"But tell me, at least, how you managed

to get away without any one seeing you. I moved heaven and earth to find a trace

Célestine shrugged, her seamed palms outthrust.

"But I never go, monsieur! I am always

Carstairs reeled as if struck.

"Good Heavens, woman!" he cried. "You are mad. It is impossible!"

"It is the truth of God," she asserted vehemently. "The people here, they too were Bretons; they understood perfectly. I tell them, early that morning—the old woman and the two sons. They ask no questions; they know. And they have just lost their servant, and are glad to give me her place. Monsieur, I have never been five kilometers from this place in fifty years. They hid me, until monsieur left.'

Carstairs found his voice with difficulty. "But-but-the letters I received? The old woman died years ago."

Célestine nodded solemnly.

"De longue main, as monsieur says. While she lived, she answered monsieur's kind inquiries; afterward, I, Célestine, for the sons could not write nor read. Now the inn is mine."

A slow anger was rising in Carstairs's breast-not so much at Célestine; he felt that he had escaped growing old with a specter, and wondered if luxury and leisure, manicures and hair-dressers, could ever have softened the ghastly old age that had crept upon her. But there burned a deep resentment against the lying old woman, dead out there in some little burial-ground by the sea-against the young men who had hidden her away and taken as a servant drudge the pretty little maiden to whom he had given his name.

"You married one of those fine sons, I

suppose?" he sneered.

Célestine shook her head in pious horror. "Monsieur knows he speaks not the truth," she said. "We Bretons are all Catholic."

"Well, so am I!" he cried. about me? You spoiled my life, without a thought. I could never have a wife and

children.'

"Ah, not so! True, monsieur is of the church, but it is not the same. He is not Breton. And he is great and rich and powerful; he could find a way. It is done. Me, I am ignorant, I do not know how; néanmoins, it is done."

"Well, I didn't," he growled.

But she only shrugged her shoulders, unconvinced.

"I want to see those two young men! Send them up to me! I will at least give them a piece of my mind, before I leave this cursed inn!"

"One of them is dead long ago," she said, with a quiet dignity. "The other, he is very, very old; much older than I am, or than monsieur is."

"Well, I want to see him anyhow," in-

sisted Carstairs.

So she clattered away in her wooden sabots, leaving Carstairs to glare about him, his mind even yet hardly able to grasp the incredibly simple solution of his life's

mystery.

And presently, in the doorway, there stood a veritable ruin of a man; stooped, leaning shakily upon a thick cane, cap in hand, and bestowing upon Carstairs a senile and toothless grin. No one could fail to see that the broken body housed a mind as broken.

Carstairs impatiently thrust a coin into his hand. His shred of an intellect associated the money with tobacco, and he bowed many times, muttering unintelligible phrases; then he tottered away. But what struck Carstairs with sickening force was the sudden, involuntary clenching of Célestine's hand when he offered the coin. He felt certain, though he tried to stifle the thought, that she would not refuse a pourboire herself. Probably a man of coarse fiber would have tendered it to her.

Instead, he bowed and left the room, following her down the stairs in silence. At the great hall door, he bowed again.

" Adieu, madame," he said simply. "Adieu, monsieur!" she curtsied; not even a "Dieu te garde," as they parted after fifty years, this time forever.

He awakened his driver; the reluctant horse was dragged from his grassy repast, and they rolled stolidly away through the sand. He did not look back, but where the crossroad forked he turned his head.

Célestine stood in the doorway of the inn of the Poisson d'Or, not looking at him, so far as he could see, but watching a flock of fowls which threatened to trespass upon her scrubbed brick hall. And her knotted fingers seemed to clasp and unclasp, as if they still yearned to clutch one of the coins with which monsieur's pocket was so well filled.

# The Black Fox

by Edison Marshall



KULKING, boldly hunting, killing, hiding, sleeping, and rising to skulk and hunt and kill again, Morgan, the black fox, was living out his wild life. That night, while Hargraves the trapper stood in his cabin doorway, in the snowswept north, he was in the zenith of his

power and beauty.

The room behind Hargraves was warm from the noisy fire; there were thick blankets and tobacco and grub and "hooch"-everything that a man needs in the north. Before him lay the wilds, in all their ruggedness and cruelty; brilliant with their snows; awful in their heavy, brooding silence; weird with the sharp-lined, grotesque shadows of bush and scrubbed tree-always unconquered and mysterious and untamed.

The cabin, with its rough comfort, was the home of Hargraves, as was fitting to his nature; and the outside was the home of Morgan, the fox, as was fitting to his nature. The fox changed it from a barren, empty place to a habitation, of which he was the center, much as a woman can change with her presence a shack of boards

into a home.

No one knew much about this Morgan, the black fox of the Chilkoot River. It was his river, his valley, yet no one knew why, for there were creatures inhabiting it with him that could crush him with one blow in a pitched battle. There were wolves and bears and moose; but for all that, the Chilkoot was Morgan's valley.

He was so swift that not one of the larger beasts could overtake him to pitch

a battle. He was so wise that no man had ever endangered him. He was so clever that he fed well and was sleek and trim and strong when the other beasts about him were dying of starvation. And Morgan

was the king of all the foxes.

As trappers know, the black and silver foxes are smaller than the southern breed of foxes. While the latter are fifty-six inches long from their pointed noses to the end of their brushes, their northern cousins measure hardly forty-five. Morgan, to conform to the dimensions of his breed, should have stood but thirteen or fourteen inches. Instead, men who had seen Morgan - and they could be counted on the fingers of two hands-knew that he was not only bigger than other black foxes, but bigger than the largest of the southern breeds.

His coal-black body, like an ink-spot against the snow, had seemed as large as a wolf's. His track was half again as large as those of the rest of the foxes. His fur-

was more beautifully black.

No one knew exactly how he got the name of Morgan. Some said that an old soldier, who had fought in the Civil War. and in his last days had prospected in the Chilkoot Valley, had named him Morgan after the famous Confederate raider.

"They're both daring robbers," he was

reported to have said.

There was another story-more widely believed—as to the origin of his name. It was said that a French Canadian, a trapper, who had known French mythology, had named the elusive creature after Morgan the Fay, the shadowy and mystic figure of medieval romance. He was fortune, opportunity, that must be grasped

in the golden moment.

His age was unknown. None knew how many years he had reigned in the Chilkoot Valley or how many trappers had wasted seasons in pursuit of him. The most skilful men had always come back empty-handed, swearing that Morgan was a ghost fox who could not be caught.

And Morgan had continued to catch his mice and ptarmigan and hare, and grow

sleeker and wiser and stronger.

Now Hargraves, standing in the door of his cabin in the hills beside the Chilkoot River, had waged the greatest campaign of all against Morgan's life. Even now, while the stars were signaling from the cold skies, the net was closing around the fox. There were traps, carefully hidden and baited, in every cross way.

The trapper was little and rather bent, but his brown, gentle eyes were squinted with determination. In the few minutes that he stood in the doorway, his eyelashes were silvering with frost. His throat was

brown and sinewy.

He stared out across the snow—first to the north, where streaks of colored light shot intermittently across the sky. Then he looked southward, toward home. A distant farm it was, where lived his wife and children, and only the beautiful skin of the black devil of a fox was needed to bring happiness to them and him. With the great price it would bring he could pay off the debt at home, and could go out of this horrible land of cold and cruelty and death.

Beside his door lay the malemutes, crouching in the snow. How easy it would be to hitch them to his sled, loaded with his grub and blankets, and mush away homeward! How easy—all that he needed

was Morgan's coat of fur.

He knew that even now the fox was skulking or boldly hunting or hiding or sleeping, no more than a few hours' journey from him. Perhaps this minute Morgan was eating the poisoned meat, or was caught in one of the hidden traps.

Hargraves had hunted long and hard, and his gains had been slow. He had spent months, baiting and pursuing and studying. He wouldn't let himself count up the weeks he had spent in the hunt, for they were so many that if he had worked through them for wages he could perhaps have

saved enough to pay off the debt; but always he had thought the fox just within

his grasp.

Always had the creature broken through his lines or passed by the poisoned meat. How many times he had found the trap empty and sprung, and the great fox-tracks streaking away! How many times he had followed the tracks with his rifle in his hands! But always his prey had eluded him.

He had learned almost every one of Morgan's hiding-places. In the months he had lived in the valley he had cut down Morgan's food supply—ptarmigan and rabbit. He had taken the last of the ermines. Now Morgan would surely have to eat the poisoned meat or take the bait from the traps! Surely the capture was but a few days off!

And then — the hitching of the malemutes to the sled, the mushing out of the barren land, the far-off trading-post, and

at last-home!

#### II

As Hargraves stood listening and watching, he began to grow cold. Not a shadow wavered on the white expanse. Not even a dog whined or stirred in its sleep. It was a vast region, seeming almost of death.

Yes — something was stirring. He saw for an instant the quick movement of a shadow in an open place. He vanished into his cabin; and when he reappeared, his rifle lay across his arm. His eyes squinted as he stared out over the starlit snow, trying to see what moved upon it.

He watched steadily a while, but did not see the movement again. At last he turned

to go inside.

His gaze rested for an instant on the hill that marked the entrance into the Chilkoot Valley; he did not know why. He watched steadily again, and this time what had seemed a shadow became a spot of living black. There could be no mistake.

Hargraves's heart was in his mouth. He knew at once what was happening; never before had Morgan climbed that hill. The trapper knew too well where it led—out of the valley and northward, to new hunt-

ing-grounds.

The spot of black was Morgan; Hargraves knew it. Somewhere through the brush clumps the fox was slinking, watchful and vigilant as ever. He was stealing out of the valley where lived such a persistent enemy. Perhaps his food supply was nearly gone; but the man did not stop to think why Morgan was going. His eyes were fast upon a bare patch of the hillside that the fox would have to cross. But the distance was too great, the chance too remote.

At last a shadow hovered for an instant on the bare place. The gun came to the trapper's shoulder, and once—twice—the bullet screamed away.

He strained his eyes, his face working; but the spot on the hill was empty again.

"You devil!" he howled after the vanished fox. His self-control gave way momentarily. "You devil! You think you've got by me, but you haven't! I'll chase you to the pole and get you yet!"

He shook his fists and listened to his own wild words. A great resolve, half-

formed, made his eyes widen.

Why not harness the dogs, and track the beast down as he would a man? He had ample supplies, and there was little danger of fresh snow covering the tracks so late in winter. Of course, there were other dangers, but every game in the north was full of them.

That almost priceless skin was worth almost any chance. It was even better to die than to go back without it! He spoke again, but his words were no longer wild.

"I'll do it!" he told the malemutes.

"We'll follow him down—over the hill, out of the valley. It's worth while as a last, long chance. And it's more than a chance, because, at the end of the chase"—his body crouched in anticipation of it—

"we'll get that skin!"

Early the next morning the silence of the Chilkoot Valley was broken by a cry. "Mush on!" roared Hargraves to his

dogs.

They strained and pulled, and at last the

sled lunged forward.

Only one creature saw Hargraves and his dogs depart — an eagle that flapped wearily above the tree-tops, the last of a noble family of eagles whose home had been in the Chilkoot Valley. His mother, when he was young, had once started to fly to him with a black bundle of fur in her talons—a half-grown fox. But before long the other natives of the valley—the ermine, hovering in a pile of snow, a ptarmigan, just emerging from hiding, and a wolf—noticed that the eagle flew with sick, unsteady strokes. She flew lower and lower,

and at last dropped the bundle of fur upon the snow, unhurt. But she herself dropped a little later, her breast torn open by the sharp teeth of her captive.

So perhaps the eagle bade Hargraves

godspeed.

#### III

THE tracks of Morgan were distinct in the snow; but to follow them the trapper had to walk much of the way in front, in-

stead of behind his dogs.

He mushed over the hill, and creepingly crossed the divide. He was long in crossing, but always the tracks in the snow led him on. He made his wretched camps, and built his fires; the snow was silent and interminable, and the stars looked down unchangingly. He would rise in the morning and go on again, steadily upward, in the trail of Morgan. The days were growing colder—it was midwinter.

At first he would find blood in the snow, where the fox had made a kill. Sometimes Morgan moved in a vast circle, until the animal came to know that he could not throw his pursuer off the trail by such tactics. Then the tracks went straight

northward.

At last Hargraves stood at the top of the divide. On the other side stretched miles of snow-covered prairie on which grew scattering clumps of brush and a few scrubby bull-pines. Into these Morgan had dipped.

Down the long slope Hargraves descended, his eyes always on the trail. This was the sixth day of the chase, and he felt that Morgan must be nearly exhausted. The fox had not made a kill for four days, as

far as the trapper could see.

Morgan did not stop to hunt, and at first the man did not understand why. Then he came to know that there was nothing to hunt. The land that he mushed through was a great, white, empty desert, where nothing lived except himself, his dogs, and the fleeing fox.

There were no tracks of the snow-shoe rabbit—none even of mice, no eyes gleaming from the brush clumps, no bark ripped from trees, no tundra cut off close by the teeth of caribou. The fox knew by his unerring instinct that he must go straight on to the next valley before his strength

was gone.

The desert was utterly still, with a silence that almost hurt the ear-drums.

The sled creaked a little, and feet crunched into the snow, but the sound of them died

quickly, as if smothered.

Hargraves began to talk aloud to break the awful silence. He shouted at his dogs, but they hardly seemed to hear. They grew slower of foot, and bright-eyed, and looked down always at the trail. They did not bark as they sped across the snow in level places, or even snore as they slept at night. They ate what food was allotted them—with little noise, for malemutes.

The man knew that he was growing afraid. He found that the scarcity of game, which would soon put the fox into his hands, was hurting him, too. He had counted on many caribou and ptarmigan along the way. His food supply was running low. There was hardly anything left for the dogs. But the tracks of the fox were fresher every day; and once in a while, far ahead of him, Hargraves caught a glimpse of the black body.

His cheeks were growing thin, and strange dreams came at night, when he was

not too tired to dream.

"You can't get away now!" he shouted

to the fox ahead of him.

He began to realize that his attitude toward Morgan was changing. No longer did he think of the two thousand dollars that such a marvelous skin would bring, or of the debt at home. He thought only of the fur itself, how he would rub his cheek on it and gloat over it. He wanted it for itself alone, as a miser wants his gold. He was maddened in the pursuit of it.

He clasped his hands tighter; his eyes were more squinted. Sometimes he had to work to open them at all, for the lashes would freeze together. The nights were cold almost beyond comprehension—so cold that each breath seemed to burn his lungs, and his fingers grew numb as he

walked.

The trees about him burst open with the frost. The bushes bent low with their load of snow. But still the fox kept ahead of

him.

The man was not going by track now. In the first place, Morgan hardly made a track, so hard was the frozen snow. The trapper could see the black body many times a day only a little way ahead of him.

Northward went the fox and northward

his pursuer.

The man's food supply was nearly gone, and he began to kill the dogs. They

looked pleadingly at him, as he pointed his rifle at them. He wondered if he only imagined the look of appeal in their eyes, for why should a creature be afraid of death in that land of cold and misery? Death was nothing to be dreaded by Hargraves, but he could not die until he had Morgan's skin.

"You don't care," he said to the first dog he shot. "You are half-starved now, and the chase is not over. You don't want to draw the sled forever, do you? There!"

He fired, and the sound startled him. It was the first time he had discharged the gun since the night in his cabin. There was no echo, and Hargraves looked about, frightened. The dog was dying at his feet.

"You must be youth!" he said to the gasping animal. "And I have killed

youth!

#### IV

HE brought himself together with a jerk. He must keep better self-control—but the eternal silence, the endless chase, were enough to madden any one. If he lost complete control of himself the fox would evade him, and he had to have the skin.

He felt his thoughts floating off into senseless channels, ilke a man's at the verge

of sleep

"Youth, you are my first sacrifice, for surely my youth is gone! Isn't my beard gray? Or is it only gray with frost? And always in the hunt for the fox—for Morgan

-youth is the first to go!"

Part of the dog-meat went to feed the other malemutes, and part of it Hargraves ate himself. He mushed on, the fox but three miles ahead of him. If the trapper had had more cartridges he would have tried to shoot him now, but he determined to wait till he drew closer.

Again the fox made a kill. Hargraves's heart sank when he saw the blood-red patch of snow. He did not know whether a sparrow or a ptarmigan had crossed Morgan's path, for only one white feather lay in the

red spot

That day Morgan gained a little. But Hargraves was not discouraged; he could still see the black form of his prey. The next day the fox gained still more, and might have escaped, had not the snow softened a little in the afternoon, so that his tracks grew distinct again. By the following day Hargraves had gained what he had lost.

His dreams were more unpleasant. He always saw himself an old, old man, with bald head and white hair and wasted, stringy legs. His teeth were gone, and he could not eat. And Morgan still led him on!

"I am an old man," he heard himself say as he was awakening. "I have killed

youth in the chase!"

The northern lights shot their joyous bands across the sky in front of him.

"I'll name you before you go," he said drunkenly. "I'll call you happiness; for after youth, happiness is the next sacrifice."

In his delirium the man was living out

a lifetime within a few days.

When he had to kill another dog the animal's eyes were pleading, and again Hargraves found it hard to shoot. The other malemutes leaped forward when the report came, and snarled as the blood poured warm and wet upon the snow. The trapper forced them back until he had quartered the body with his ax.

"Happiness is a harder sacrifice than youth," he said to the other dogs. He laughed a little, mirthless laugh. "I'm go-

ing mad, I guess!"

He tried to smoke, to think clearly again, but nothing removed the feeling of strange depression. He sat with his head in his hands while the night came down and the color brightened and faded in the northern sky.

His craving for Morgan's skin did not diminish, but the joy of the chase was gone. It had become a bitter passion instead of a fierce joy. He swore angrily at the dogs, the stars, the fox in front. The crackle of

his flame was no longer cheerful.

His dog-team cut down, his speed was reduced. The load was too heavy for the two remaining dogs. Hargraves began to throw off all except the utmost necessities of his meager life. But still his weakened dogs could hardly draw the sled, and the distance between them and Morgan remained almost the same.

He was living entirely on dog-meat now, and drinking a little tea and melted snow. Always he left his sleeping-bag in the dawn, and relentlessly mushed on. Often he had to force the malemutes with his whip; and when they fell in their traces, it took hours to get them to their feet. But the exhausted fox could not escape while his pursuer rested. He stretched out in the snow, and only rose to flee when Hargraves mushed on again.

The next night the third malemute was killed. He had been a favorite of the trapper, but was not so strong as the remaining dog.

Hargraves found it hardest of all to kill

his pet.

"I'm a fool!" he said, snarling. "I've got to eat—if I don't I won't get the skin. I shouldn't have a heart anyway; so I guess I'll kill it off!"

He pulled the trigger, and was startled

when the dog fell at his feet.

"There goes my heart!" he said. "A man that's got to win can't monkey with a heart. He can't have one, that's all. It's the next thing that goes after happiness!"

He cruelly beat off the last of his team while he divided the body between himself and the surviving malemute. His eyes

were gleaming and cold.

The fire was built, and a piece of dogflesh broiled. Again the stars came out, and the trapper's dreams were evil. He saw himself heartless and unhappy and old,

The fox was only a mile away now—too far to try to hit him with a rifle. Hargraves wanted to wait till he was sure before he fired again. He could see the black body, moving as he moved, resting as he rested; but he could hardly gain on it—a few hundred yards a day.

The man had forgotten everything but

his lust for Morgan's fur.

#### V

THE last dog fell at noon, and his master struck at him with vicious cruelty. Hargraves had beaten the dogs before, but always because it was necessary to force them on. Now he laughed savagely as his club thwacked against the animal's side. But the beast rose at last, to stagger slowly.

Hargraves felt that it was the last day of the chase. The fox was almost within gunshot, and a strange, ominous grayness hung over the world of snow. The sun was not shining from its low place in the southern sky, but the trapper could not think clearly enough to know what the darkness foreshadowed. He stumbled on.

It was growing dusk when the dog fell again. With a cry of rage, Hargraves leaped toward him. He beat him mercilessly about the head, until the animal's blood made spots upon the snow. Then he

stopped, frightened.

He touched the dog, and backed away a few feet. He came closer, and tried to roll up the senseless creature's eyelid. He succeeded at last, and a brown, glazing eye leered at him.

The last of the malemutes was dead! The man looked about for a while, dazed. He looked at himself, at his hands, and then

began to sob, though no tears came from his

"I've done it all now!" he said. "All that I had power to spend I have spent." He looked at the dead dog. "What are you-what is it that dies after a man's heart? I guess you are hope. Or perhaps you are life itself, or both, for one without the other isn't any good. You are hope, and I have given up!"

He fell forward, and as he fell the snow began to fall. With it came the night. He could hardly see the dead dog at his feet, so thick were the flakes and the shadows. So the chase was over-the fox could slink away or hide himself in the snow. The

pursuer was beaten. But he was not sure that he cared.

All he wanted now was a place to die. Perhaps he was almost dead now, for things

seemed hardly real.

Far across the snow came a gleam of light that was not part of the aurora or the sunset. What could it be? He knew what it resembled—the gleam that used to come through the window of his house at evening, as he trudged homeward across the fields. But it couldn't be that; there were hundreds, or even thousands, of snowy, desolate miles between. It must be the light of heaven!

Since he was so tired and so old and so sad, he did not care. He would go to meet this light, whatever it were. If it were

heaven, he was glad.

He stumbled blindly forward into the thick snowfall toward it. He stopped an instant to shake the snow from his eyes, and to see if the light had faded. No, it had not. It was nearer now-

But what was the black and white mound, ten feet off, perhaps, at the very

limit of his vision?

He strained his eyes, trying to see more clearly into the blur of snowflakes. As he watched, he could see a movement, a brushing away of the white from the mound till only black remained.

Hargraves took three bounds forward, and a lithe, black body raised itself from the snow. It tried to slink away on its weak legs, unyielding to the last; but the man had lifted his gun-barrel, and brought it down with all his remaining strength. The point of the butt struck the skull of Morgan, the fox, and again the snow was The slender body quivered and stained.

lay still.

Dazed and unbelieving, Hargraves sat down in the snow beside the body of his Scarce knowing what he did, he drew his knife from its sheath, and began to skin the creature. He sang a strange song as he worked, as he had always done. The beautiful fur, unspoiled by the long chase, and as soft as velvet-he peeled from the flesh. He pulled it from the legs, and stretched it out.

It was huge for the skin of a black foxthe trophy of a lifetime. He rubbed his

wasted cheek against it.

"I've got you at last!" he said to it. but there was little triumph in his voice. "You led me a chase, but I got you. Aren't you beautiful? I hardly think you can be real. You're as soft as-as heaven."

Heaven! It made him think of the light again. Hungrily he turned his gaze upward, and at last he saw the feeble gleam. He clambered to his feet, and staggered away into the storm; and all the way he talked to the fur he held against his face.

"I've spent everything I had to spend to get you-sacrificed 'em all, youth and happiness and heart and hope; but I've

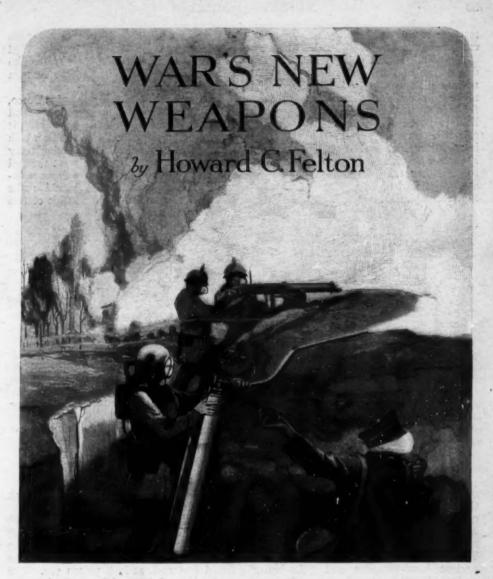
won at last!"

Then his eyes widened.

"But what good are you going to do me, now I've got you? I've spent everything that you could help me enjoy—traded it off for you. And now I am going to die -to go away forever, and I can't take you with me. The light-it is coming near me now. I shall have you only for a little while, for my time to go is almost here. The light is very bright-my little space with you is almost crossed. Was the chase worth while, fox? I gave so much, and won so late. I'm afraid that I have been a fool. And what a happy, golden light!"

Hargraves swayed back and forth, and staggered feebly forward. His hands went up before him and found a door. Then he fell upon the threshold of a miner's cabin.

The black fox's skin was still pressed tight against his cheek when the miner dragged him in, unconscious, into warmth and shelter.



HEN the great war broke out there was much learned comparison of the armament of the opposing forces that were hastening to make a slaughter-pit of Europe. The small arms, in particular, received profound attention, and much forecasting of results was based on the relative merits of the French, British, and German rifles.

That was about the last we have heard of the rifles and the forecasts. Probably not five hundred Americans in civil life could tell you, offhand, the names of the various small arms used on the European battle-fields, to say nothing of their salient

This war has been remarkably redundant in upsets of expert predictions; but none has been more pronounced and complete than the overturn of those predicated on the superiority of this or that rifle. We were told that the day of cavalry charges was about a half-century in the past—and within a month there were scores of them. Modern fortresses acting as supports for a field army made a frontier practically impregnable, the experts declared—and the German artillery smashed such forts al-

most as readily and rapidly as you could

crack peanuts.

Above all, it was pointed out that the deadly fire of the latest rifles, which kill at any distance up to two miles, would make it impossible for hostile armies to get fairly in sight of each other. Germany was held to be at a serious disadvantage because the trajectory of the German bullet is somewhat higher than the flight of the

cause the trajectory of the German bullet is somewhat higher than the flight of the French or English, so that her rifle sweeps its field of fireless completely.

swiftly became apparent that a rifle which executes at two miles, while undoubtedly a marvel of science, did not meet the full needs of the situation. There arose a demand for equipment that would make slaughter simple and prolific inside of two

A GERMAN MACHINE GUN OF THE WATER-COOLED TYPE, SIMILAR IN GENERAL DESIGN TO THE MAXIM GUN AND FITTED WITH FOLDING CARRIAGE—THIS GUN IS CARRIED BY TWO MEN

But the armies played it rather low on the war colleges. They got so close together in a few weeks that long-range rifles, as such, were almost useless, and no one remembered anything about trajectories. They were thinking of bayonet and butt, of ancient hand-grenades and "fire-balls," and good, old-fashioned stones of a neat and throwable size. Thus they proved once more what has been history for five thousand years—that when two armies of brave men are turned out to fight over a wide countryside, they will eventually come to hand-grips in spite of all the scientists and strategists and text-books in the world.

The Turco is just an ignorant, blackfaced African who would not recognize an "enveloping movement" if he found one in his blankets; but the entire output of the Krupp works and the German General Staff could not prevent what had been dehundred yards; and both sides were quick to see and supply the need.

clared impossible — a wounded Turco

picked up with his hands so firmly locked

in a dead Prussian's hair that they had to

be pried open. He had killed the German

and of a few millions of other men possessed

with the same determination to kill, it

In consideration of this aggressive Turco,

with his ten fingers.

Immediately there came forward in great numbers the new and terrible "one-man" machine guns; quantities of hand-grenades of all sorts and sizes; fire-bombs, and then liquid fire, and, at last, poison gas. The next weapon that soldiers will have to face may be some contrivance for injecting disease-germs. Even now it is officially charged by General Botha that the Germans poisoned the wells in South Africa in their retreat before the British forces. And at The Hague the doors of Mr. Carnegie's convention hall are bolted and rusting!

In a world war there is no material appeal from the force of might. But with certain peoples, such as the French and English, there are "things that a fellow can't do." This feeling is a heritage that is stronger than the urge of necessity or revenge. The Declaration of Independence



A FRENCH MACHINE GUN OF RECENT TYPE—THE BARREL IS COOLED BY A CURRENT OF AIR FORCED THROUGH THE CASING BY THE DISCHARGE OF THE GUN—THE SMOKE IS SEEN ISSUING SIDEWISE FROM THE TRIPOD

was born of it—"a decent respect for the opinion of mankind." In some quarters the philosophy of world-power has stifled this force; yet in the early days of the war the captain of a German raider spared a British liner because it had women and children on board.

The hand-grenade is one of the oldest of the gunpowder missiles. It was probably the first exploding projectile of any kind. So far as the writer can learn, there is no definite record of its first appearance, but it seems to have come into pretty general use about the middle of the seventeenth century. "Grenadiers" as a recognized corps are mentioned by John Evelyn in the summer of 1678. Evelyn did not apparently esteem them highly, for he dismisses them thus briefly:

Now were brought into service a new kind of

soldiers called grenadiers, who were dexterous in the flinging of hand-grenades. They had furred caps with coped crowns, which made them look very fierce.

Evidently Mr. Evelyn expected about as good results from their looks as from their weapons—that is to say, their grenades.

weapons—that is to say, their grenades.

These were probably the most heavily armed foot-soldiers that ever went to battle. They must have been huge men to carry a supply of grenades, a sling for throwing them, a musket, a bayonet, a short battle-ax, a sword, and a dagger. Despite the fact that they were animated arsenals, it is likely that the moral effect of their attack was greater than the execution.

One of their weak points was the fact that they sometimes broke up their attack with their own artillery. Their grenades were powder-filled balls, exploded by a fuse,



TWO MACHINE GUNS OF THE "ONE-MAN" TYPE—ABOVE, THE LEWIS, AN AMERICAN INVENTION CAPABLE OF FIRING FOUR HUNDRED AND FORTY ROUNDS PER MINUTE—BELOW, THE HOTCHKISS, OR "MITRAILLEUSE PORTATIVE." USED BY THE FRENCH ARMY



HAND-GRENADES USED IN THE TRENCHES-THIS DRAWING SHOWS BOMBS OF SEVERAL PATTERNS, ALL OF WHICH HAVE FIGURED IN THE TRENCH WARFARE IN FRANCE AND BELGIUM

which the grenadier lighted before throwing, just as a boy lights a giant cracker. Often the result was much the same as with the boy and the cracker. The fuse would often burn slowly, and then, as the grenadiers charged immediately after hurling the bombs, they arrived in the midst of the enemy in time to get the benefit of their own missiles.

Save for mention in sieges here and there, grenadiers seem to have gradually faded out in the eighteenth century. When Napoleon swept Europe, nothing much remained but the name. A regiment might have a "grenadier company," but the men who formed it were not equipped with bombs. The term merely meant that they were the tallest members of the regiment, selected to form a

show company.

Hand-grenades were generally regarded as being in a class with the rapier and the crusader's mace when General Baden-Powell interested readers of the daily newspapers—and annoyed the besieging Boers — by using them at the defense of Mafeking. Then the Japanese at Port Arthur demonstrated that the grenade might still have an important rôle to play in siege warfare.

So it was that military men were not greatly surprised when there came an insistent demand for grenades from the trenches in France and Flanders.

These modern hand-grenades are nearly as much of an improvement over the ancient bombs as the siege-howitzer over the culverin. Some of them are not properly hand-grenades, for they are fitted up with a slender rod that can be inserted in a rifle-barrel and driven by a charge of powder into the enemy's trenches five or six hundred yards away. Or they can be thrown from a sort of sling to a distance of perhaps fifty yards.

In shape and size they are like a rough



ON THE LEFT, A RUSSIAN HAND-GRENADE, IN WHICH THE FUSE IS LIGHTED BY PULLING SMALL RING IN HANDLE ON THE RIGHT, A HOME - MADE FRENCH HAND-GRENADE

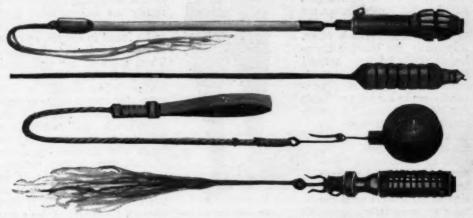
iron bottle that would hold about a pint. Their capacity is probably somewhat smaller than that of their forebears, but their exploding force is immeasurably greater. They are used in both attack and defense, and their mechanism is such that they are certain to explode on contact, eliminating the greatest danger that beset the old-time grenadier.

There are more than a score of types of machine guns on the firing-lines of Europe, but the most novel and interesting are the famous "one-man" guns, which are being substituted for the rifle just as rapidly as they can be produced. Two of the leading makes of this small but deadly implement are the Lewis and the Hotchkiss, both of which are weapons of American origin, though both are manufactured abroad. Essentially. there is little difference in the

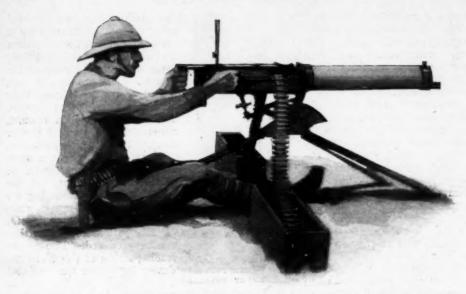
mechanism of these two guns. Both are air-cooled, and both have attained a fire of more than four hundred rounds to the minute. The larger and older types of machine

gun are water-cooled.

You understand, of course, that the heat generated by an almost continuous explosion of smokeless powder is terrific, and unless these guns are artificially cooled, like a gasoline engine, they bulge, or "jam," in a few seconds. The mechanism



VARIOUS TYPES OF HAND-GRENADES USED IN THE PRESENT WAR—THE FIRST AND FOURTH HAVE
TAILS TO STEADY THEIR FLIGHT WHEN THROWN; THE SECOND IS INTENDED FOR FIRING
FROM A RIFLE; THE THIRD HAS A STRAP WHICH FASTENS TO THE WRIST AND
A HOOK WHICH LIGHTS THE FUSE WHEN THE BOMB IS THROWN



A MACHINE GUN OF THE WATER-COOLED TYPE, WHICH HAS BEEN ADOPTED FOR USE IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY—THE MECHANISM IS SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE GERMAN GUN SHOWN ON PAGE 50

is astonishingly simple. It consists broadly in utilizing the force of one discharge to

bring on the second, with the result that the bullets tumble out of the barrels in an unbroken stream.

One of the first German contributions to trench-warfare was "liquid fire." Just what this substance is does not clearly appear from the available reports of it. It has been used successfully only in the Argonne Forest, where the trenches are at some points almost within bayonet reach of each other. Apparently the burning chemical is projected from a small tank, the whole apparatus resembling the chemical fire-extinguishers in the halls of hotels and office-buildings. A soldier can carry the tank on his back and play a stream of fire through a hose.

As to the so-called "poison gas," it would perhaps be wise to postpone discussion of the subject until the facts are more fully known and the heat of controversy subsides. It may be stated, however, that the fumes or vapor which the Germans have used to aid their attacks on the lines of the Allies cannot

be properly described as "asphyxiating gas," though that term is in common use. "Asphyxiation" means choking to death, and it would be practically impossible to succeed in

that amiable enterprise in the open air.

To overpower a line of soldiers in the open there is need of something stronger than merely an unbreathable gas; and this more deadly agency is to be found in chlorin and the deadly oxid family of vapors. These gases do not asphyxiate—they kill like a blow with an ax, or inflict deadly injuries upon the respiratory system. An inhalation of chlorin, if not immediately fatal, results in a burning of the tissue of the lungs, with the probable result of death after agonizing tortures.

Carbon monoxid gas is as deadly as prussic acid. You do not choke—you die as if shot through the brain. Even a few whiffs of it, mingled with clean air, will cause vertigo and fainting. Many a woman who is



THE MODERN INFAN-TRYMAN EQUIPPED WITH GOGGLES AND RESPIRA-TOR AS A PROTECTION AGAINST GAS ATTACKS

troubled with headache and fainting spells when at work in her kitchen has "back-lit" her gas-stove, which is one of the best home ways of generating this deadly gas. When one so poisoned is found soon enough after losing consciousness, and the doctor's diagnosis is correct, life is saved by drawing off the poisoned blood and stimulating the blood-centers with a salt solution. Artificial respiration, the remedy for asphyxiation, is the least important part.

It is interesting to recall the fact that the use of poisonous gases was suggested to the British government by Admiral Lord Dundonald in 1846, when there was expectation of war with France, but the proposal was rejected on the ground that it "would not accord with the feelings and principles of civilized warfare." It is the one distinctly new method of slaughter which the present world-war has produced. Even the "liquid fire" of the Germans in the Argonne, while we do not know exactly what it is, plainly traces its descent from the "Greek fire" with which Archimedes and his fellow townsmen seriously annoyed the Roman legionaries at the siege of Syracuse. Greek fire was not liquid, but, according to tradition, it was like the German substance in that it burned until burned out, and there was no way to quench it. It must have been a formidable weapon

against soldiers forced to depend on wooden towers and wooden supports in their siege operations.

"Fire-balls," too, are a revival rather than a new device. Of course, modern science has improved them, but in purpose and character they are essentially unaltered. The scientific flares are lineal descendants of the rockets whose "red glare gave proof through the night that our flag was still there."

These expedients for lighting up the enemy's lines at night are more dependable than search-lights, because a search-light used at a given point for any length of time is doomed to be reached by artillery. Furthermore, when opposed lines of trenches are within short rushing distance, the attackers are likely to be silhouetted by their own search-lights, which make them fair targets for marksmen outside the zone of light.

The present conflict was nearly a year old when the poison vapor, the first child of advanced science in the business of butchery, made its appearance. Will this prove to be the limit of modern war's development in deadliness and horror, or shall we hear shortly that means have been discovered — and utilized — for projecting the germs of some hideous epidemic into the ranks of the enemy?

#### FOUNTAIN SONG

I am the sprite of the fountain;
Sprung from the gloom am I,
Out of the womb of the mountain,
Big with the kiss of the sky.
I am the fugitive glory
Singing the strong soul's story;
Twinkling, tinkling, glad to be
Out of the prison of earth set free;
Dancing, mad with the cosmic tune,
Laughing under the stars and moon—
Back to the ocean soon!

Back to the sky and back to the sea—
Oh, I was a prisoner long!
But the love of the vast was strong in me;
I fed on the dream of the strong.
And there, while the slow gloom chained the deed,
I wrought my vision of silvery speed;
And out of the dread hush round about
I fashioned a gladsome victor-shout!
Sister of wave and cloud am I,
And the world grows green as I pass by—
Back to the sea and sky.

# The ADVANCE of WOMAN SUFFRAGE in AMERICA



## By Anne O'Hagan

N September 10, 1853, when the World's Temperance Convention was in session in New York, Miss Antoinette Brown, a member of the convention, attempted to address her fellow delegates. The result was thus reported

in the New York
Evening Post of that

Thereupon arose a scene of unparalleled violence which continued to the hour of adjournment. No sooner had she opened her mouth than she was subjected to every species of interruption and insult. Hisses, groans, squeals, and taunting epithets, too vile for publication, fell from the most respectable lips. [The italics are ours.] Shouts of "Shame on the woman! Shame on the brazen-faced creature! Put her out! Down with the woman!" were constantly hurled.

Miss Brown since better known by her married name, Antoinette Brown Blackwell—was persona non grata to the "most respectable" gentlemen of the World's Temperance Convention for two reasons. One of these was the fact that she was attending a Woman's Rights Convention which was also

in session in New York at the time. The other, and apparently the leading reason, was that the masculine members of the gathering considered her guilty of unwomanly conduct in trying to speak for those who had elected her a delegate.

Sixty years later. the men and women believers in woman suffrage in New York held a great meeting to close their season's work; it was in the Metropolitan Opera House, which was filled to its huge capacity, as if for a gala performance in honor of a visiting The leader prince. of the movement.



DR. ANNA HOWARD SHAW, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

From a thotograph by Dujont, New York

Dr. Anna Shaw, spoke to an audience silent and rapt. The most popular and probably the most astute statesman in the country, Ex-President Roosevelt, spoke and the great crowd hung breathless, smiled, laughed as he decreed.

A year and a half later, another meeting was held in Carnegie Hall, to open the work of the New York campaign of 1915. The great auditorium was packed; men and which has required more than half a century to grow from ridicule and abuse to a fair measure of popularity may reasonably congratulate itself upon being deep-rooted in normal human progress. It is, obviously, no mere overnight mushroom growth sprung from a spirit of too generous enthusiasm and too facile experimentation.

To what may the change of public sentiment logically be held due? Why have



MISS JANE ADDAMS, VICE-PRESIDENT AT LARGE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN VOTERS

From a thotograph



MRS. CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE ALLIANCE

Copyrighted shotogrash by Underwood & Underwood, N.Y.

roman from all over the cour

women from all over the country spoke, encouraging the women of New York with tales of the accomplishments of other States and countries. The enthusiastic audience pledged more than a hundred and fifteen thousand dollars for the year's work — a larger sum than was ever before raised at a single political meeting. Over two thousand women throughout the State were announced as having pledged something even more valuable than money—all their time, all their energy and enthusiasm, to unpaid work for the ballot.

Spectacular as is the contrast between 1853 and 1915, it was not brought about with any speed of prestidigitation. A cause

even conservative clergymen ceased to hurl St. Paul in the teeth of a woman mounting a platform to speak?

First, of course, in the list of reasons is the permeation of all society in all lands, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the ideals of democracy. Even the remotest, least-enlightened subjects of the most autocratic ruler remaining to us have felt the thrill of that great wave which began to spread outward toward the rims of the earth when the French revolutionists, putting into practise the theories of the English philosophers, threw into the big pond of politics that little pebble about liberty, fraternity, and equality. Democ-

Editor's Note—A woman suffrage amendment to the constitution of New Jersey will be submitted to the voters of that State at a special election on October 19. Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania will ratify or reject a woman suffrage amendment at the regular election on November 2.

racy has grown, and with its growth there has been an increasing perception, not only among women but also among men, that whatever society might logically name as cause for exclusion from citizenship, it might not logically name sex as such a cause.

But the general democratization of society has not been the only factor in the growth of suffrage sentiment. Perhaps even more powerful than this philosophic To many men, as well as to a great number of women, there has seemed nothing revolutionary in woman's request to have restored to her the privilege which she used to have—the privilege of declaring for herself her wishes about the conditions under which she worked. And so, again, the suffrage movement has grown.

But there has been a third element in this steady increase. From the moment when the doors of the first institution of



MRS. EMMA SMITH DEVOE, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN VOTERS From a photograph by James & Bushnell, Seattle

MISS ALICE STONE BLACKWELL, OF BOSTON, EDITOR OF THE WOMAN'S JOURNAL From a photograph by Marceau, Boston

cause has been the change in industrial conditions.

Work, in which the majority of women have always shared, the idle class being in every age comparatively negligible, has changed from a household matter to one of mills and factories. Women have inevitably followed their spinning-wheels and looms, their soap-kettles and their preserving-jars, their poultices and herb teasall the paraphernalia of the industries in which they have been busied from the beginning of time-out of the home and into the factory. They have found, and to a great extent they have been able to show men, that the conditions of their work, formerly a matter of their own control, have become a matter more or less bound up with local politics.

higher learning swung open to women, it was decreed that women should desire a voice in government.

Educated energies demand an outlet. You cannot spend years in teaching a girl the beauty of literature, the grandeurs of philosophy, and the pride and glory of national development, and then ask the woman to use what she has learned solely in the making of frosting for cake and lace for pillow-shams, even if you interpret those occupations in their most sublime and poetic terms of household management and home-making.

It was no more possible that woman could accept education solely as a toy or an adornment than that man could. To educate women meant that many fields of activity must be opened to them. To educate



MRS. J. NORMAN WHITEHOUSE, A LEADER OF THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN NEW YORK

From a copyrighted photograph by Dupont, New York

them meant, moreover, that, having been tested in youth by some of the same standards as men in their youth, they were aware of their own abilities. They knew that they, as well as men, had valuable gifts to offer to society through other channels than the age-old one of a four-walls housekeeping. Housekeeping itself, intelligently interpreted, had become largely a social-political affair. To let loose upon the world large armies of trained and educated young women could not fail to result in the spread of suffrage sentiment.

Democracy has not developed at a uniform rate in all countries, and even in single nations certain aspects of democracy have outstripped others. So that two years ago, when that enthusiastic New York audience cheered Ex-President Roosevelt for announcing himself a suffragist, and last November, when that devoted body of men and women pledged a great sum to one year's work for suffrage in a single State, they had seen equal suffrage already at work. It was no longer merely an intellectual concept, merely a corollary of democracy which had not yet been worked out. It was a method of government which had been tried by increasingly large numbers of communities in different parts of the world for decades—in some instances for more than half a century.

For example, in Finland, taxpaying women in the country districts had been in enjoyment of municipal franchise since 1863, and taxpaying city women since 1872, although full franchise was not granted to all women until 1906. In Sweden, taxpaying widows and spinsters had had the municipal franchise since 1862; in England and Wales, women had had municipal suffrage on the same terms as men since 1869, and in Scotland since 1881. In the Isle of Man, women property-owners had



MRS. LEONARD THOMAS, A LEADER OF THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN NEW YORK

From a shotogrash by Rochlitz, New York



MISS FLORA DUNLAP, PRESIDENT OF THE IOWA EQUAL SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

had full parliamentary suffrage since 1881, and women taxpayers since 1892.

In New Zealand full suffrage had been granted to all women in 1893, after they had enjoyed municipal suffrage since 1886. In 1902, when Australia

united her six states in a federation, two of these -South Australia and West Australia-had already fully enfranchised their women, and the first federal parliament made this law universal.

In Canada, in the Province of Ontario, property-owning widows and spinsters have had the municipal franchise since 1884; and British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Manitoba, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia have all followed Ontario's example by granting municipal suffrage to property-holding or taxpaying women.

All over the world, therefore, there has been slowly creeping into practise the theory that the women with a stake in the community should have a voice in regulating the affairs of the community. It only remained to enlarge the definition of "a stake in the community." For equal suffrage, full or partial as the case might be, has existed without causing the social and domestic upheaval prophesied by alarmists who still insist upon talking as if about something which had never been submitted to the test of experience.

Now as to the United States.

School suffrage, in differently restricted forms, has been in practise in the following States from the dates noted: Kentucky, 1838; Kansas, 1861; Michigan, 1875; Minnesota, 1875; Colorado, 1876; New Hampshire, 1878; Oregon, 1878; Massachusetts, 1879; Vermont, New York, and Mississippi, 1880; Nebraska, 1883; Montana, New Jersey, North and South Dakota, and Arizona, 1887; Oklahoma, 1890; Connecticut, 1893; Ohio, 1894; Delaware, 1898; Wisconsin, 1900.





MRS. FRANK M. ROESSING, PRESIDENT OF THE PENNSYLVANIA WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

From a photograph



MRS. J. GALE EBERT, PRESIDENT OF THE WEST VIRGINIA EQUAL SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

From a thotograph



MRS. E. F. FEICKERT, PRESIDENT OF THE NEW JERSEY WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

From a shotogrash



MRS. CHARLES F. EDSON, A LEADER OF THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT IN CALIFORNIA

From a shotograph by Matzene, Los Angeles

Suffrage on taxation and bonding propositions was granted, subject to various restrictions, to women in Montana, Iowa, Louisiana, New York, Kansas, and Michigan at various dates between 1887 and 1908. Kansas granted municipal suffrage

Arizona, 1912, Alaska, 1913; Montana and Nevada, 1914.

With such a record of the gradual, normal, and steady increase of woman suffrage throughout the entire civilized world as these dates and figures show, is it not some-



MRS. RAYMOND BROWN, PRESIDENT OF THE NEW YORK STATE WOMAN SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION From a photograph by the Otto Sarony Co., New York

to all women in 1887. Illinois, in 1913, granted all women the right to vote for Presidential electors, certain county and State officers, and all municipal officers. And full suffrage has been granted to all women in the following States at the dates attached: Wyoming, 1869; Colorado, 1893; Utah and Idaho, 1896; Washington, 1910; California, 1911; Kansas, Oregon, and



MRS. JOSEPHINE C. PRESTON, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, STATE OF WASHINGTON

From a thotograph

what disingenuous for the opponents of woman suffrage to speak of it as an untried political system, and to predict all forms of domestic and social disaster as a result of its adoption?

If woman suffrage is to have a calamitous effect upon the individual woman, upon the family, and upon the community, woman suffrage must already have had that effect.

If the vote in the hands of women becomes not the simple instrument by which opinion may be expressed, but a scourge of devastation, it must already have proved itself such a scourge. If full enfranchisement is to result in complete demoralization of homes, women, and society, then there must surely be examples of this demoralization ready for the opponents of suffrage to cite. Moreover, the partial forms of suffrage which have been so long enjoyed by women in many States must long ago have produced at least a partial demoralization.

It is illogical to say that a woman's ballot cast for a school superintendent is a good, sensible, practical thing, but that a woman's ballot for a Presidential elector becomes corrupt, hysterical, or futile. It is contradictory to claim that a woman, as a property-owner, may have an intelligent and patriotic opinion to express on a bond proposition in her own town, but that a



MISS KATE M. GORDON, PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTH-ERN STATES WOMAN SUFFRAGE CONFERENCE

From a photograph by Harris & Ewing, Washington



MISS JEAN GORDON, A LEADER OF THE SUFFRAGE
MOVEMENT IN LOUISIANA

From a photograph by Shrader, Little Rock

woman as the purchasing agent of family food and clothing may not have an intelligent and patriotic opinion to express in regard to the tariff.

If the full suffrage for which the women of four Eastern States are asking this year would be a calamity, then there must be calamity in various degrees to be pointed out in all those States in which various degrees of suffrage have prevailed since Kentucky granted school suffrage in 1838. What are the facts?

First, that wherever woman suffrage has been tried for long or short periods, the opponents of suffrage have never yet succeeded in finding a dozen responsible men to assert, over their own names, that it has had any bad results.

In Wyoming, that veteran equal suffrage State where women have voted for nearly fifty years, there has been, for twenty-five years, a standing challenge issued by the suffragists to their opponents, to find anywhere in the State two respectable men who will assert over their own names and addresses that woman suffrage has had any evil results. Thus far the two men have not been forthcoming.

There has never been a movement, once suffrage has been adopted, toward a return to the old system. Moreover, suffrage has



MRS. HELEN RING ROBINSON, A MEMBER OF THE STATE SENATE OF COLORADO

From a thotograph



MISS KATHRYN CLARKE, A MEMBER OF THE STATE SENATE OF OREGON

From a copyrighted thotograph by Waldo H. Parker



MISS JULIA C. LATHROP. CHIEF OF THE FEDERAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

From a photograph by Buck, Washington

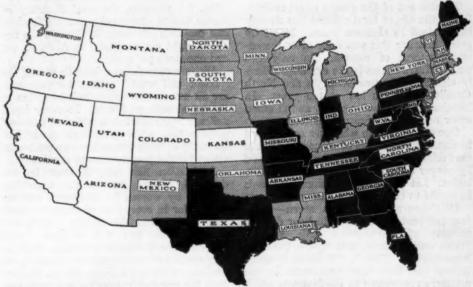


MRS. FRANCES W. MUNDS, A MEMBER OF THE STATE SENATE OF ARIZONA

From a photograph

grown very largely by the conversion of the nearest adjoining State to a belief in the system which it has had an opportunity of studying in its neighbor.

But woman suffrage, its advocates urge, has had positive results. They argue that not only has it failed to disrupt society, their children with their fathers; but it took fifty years' hard labor—largely conducted by suffragists—to place this statute upon the books, whereas in Colorado and California women had themselves appointed equal guardians of their children at the next session after their enfranchisement.



SUFFRAGE MAP OF THE UNITED STATES — THE EQUAL SUFFRAGE STATES ARE WHITE; THE SHADED STATES GRANT PARTIAL SUFFRAGE TO WOMEN; THE BLACK STATES, NO SUFFRAGE TO WOMEN

destroy homes, and subvert nature, but it has performed actual services to the community. The women of New York and of the other campaign States are asking for the ballot on other grounds than that of mere logic and fair play; they point to social benefits which have accrued through the enfranchisement of women.

In legislation affecting women and children, women have succeeded in introducing a higher measure of civilization, with less time and energy wasted, than has been attained in the male suffrage States. Particular attention is called to the qualifying clause in this statement. It is not averred that there has been no good legislation concerning women and children in the male suffrage States, but only that this has been attained more swiftly in the equal suffrage States, and that once gained, there has not been such a tendency to undo it as has been seen in New York during this very year.

In Massachusetts, for example, there is a law making mothers equal guardians of In the United States women have full suffrage, at this writing, in eleven States and in Alaska. In Illinois, they have only restricted suffrage, voting for municipal officers and Presidential electors, but not for members of the Legislature. In the statistics following, therefore, Illinois is not included as an equal suffrage State.

Not even the most vehement opposers of everything which might by any chance be described as "feminist" can deny that there is no right so closely affecting the dignity, happiness, and well-being of women as their rights as mothers. How are these rights regarded in the male suffrage States and in the equal suffrage States?

In twenty-five male suffrage States, the father is the sole guardian of the children. In six of these he has the right to will or deed away from the mother any living child or any posthumous one. In nine out of eleven suffrage States, fathers and mothers have been made equal guardians of their children.

As intensely as women are affected by the laws governing their relationship with their children they are affected by the laws bearing upon sexual morality. How do these laws compare in the equal suffrage and the male suffrage States? And how far may the more decent and civilized standards prevailing in the equal suffrage States be attributed to the women's votes?

In nine out of the eleven equal suffrage States the age of legal consent has already been raised to eighteen years. In nearly every instance this was done after the enfranchisement of women. In only two male suffrage States is the age unqualifiedly eighteen. In two—Georgia and North Carolina—it is as low as ten years. In Mississippi it is twelve years, and in seven other non-suffrage States it is fourteen.

One department in which we are justified in scanning the effects of woman suffrage is that relating to the protection of childhood by proper educational and industrial legislation. Let us see how the situation stands

in regard to children in industry.

Of eleven suffrage States, seven—sixtyfour per cent—have an eight-hour day for minors; of thirty-seven male suffrage States, only thirteen, or thirty-five per cent, have this law. That is, the States in which women vote have been progressive in this matter, as compared to the States in which they do not vote, almost in the proportion of two to one.

In eleven equal suffrage States eleven per cent of the boys under fifteen are at work; in thirty-seven male suffrage States nearly twenty-six per cent of the boys un-

der fifteen are at work.

In eleven suffrage States two per cent of the girls under fifteen are at work; in thirty-seven male suffrage States twelve per cent of the girls under fifteen are at work.

How have women, possessing the franchise, treated their own sex in the matter of industry? In four out of eleven suffrage States, and in certain industries in two others, an eight-hour day for working women has been established. Not one male suffrage State has this law for women, although twenty have it for men.

How about education? Compulsory education is legally established in every equal suffrage State. In seven States the percentage of illiteracy among persons over ten years old is less than one per cent; in three others, it is from one to three per cent. The eleven most illiterate States in

the union are all male suffrage States, nine of them having either no compulsory education laws or practically worthless ones.

Although some of these States are Southern, and the educational problem is therefore complicated with the racial question, despite the half-century which has passed for its solution, the statistics even in regard to native whites are illuminating. In Virginia, for example, the total illiteracy of native whites above ten years old is eight and one-fifth per cent; in Georgia the figure is eight per cent, and in Alabama ten and one-tenth per cent.

Welfare commissions, juvenile courts, the "honor and trust" system for prisoners, are all movements owing their inception to the equal suffrage States. In every equal suffrage State there is a widowed mothers' pension law, while more than one-half of the male suffrage States have no such provision for the preservation of the family.

Legislation like this, it must be understood, is not due to the overriding of men by women in the equal suffrage States, for in every one of them the male vote outnumbers the female. It is due merely to the fact that in these States women have a simple, articulate, and direct method of declaring their opinions and desires. Suffragists have always claimed that the greatest reason for woman's possession of the ballot, after the reason of justice, was that woman thought of different things from men. The body of legislation in equal suffrage States tends to prove this: and there can be no question that the things of which woman thinks, and for which she works, help in the civilization and efficiency of the community.

Nowhere has the woman vote brought in the millennium—it does not claim to be a superhuman agency. But its advocates claim that on the whole those States in which women vote have a more enlightened and benignant body of legislation than the male suffrage States in regard to the matters in which women naturally take the greatest interest—in the matters affecting the health, education, and moral welfare of

children and women.

In short, the laws of these States show to a certain extent the introduction of the maternal element into government. To make that element felt in politics in its due proportion is the greatest hope of woman suffrage; to point to the fact that it has, to a degree, done so, is its greatest boast.



IX rows

## LICE



### by A. deFord Pitney

ILLUSTRATED BY R.F. SCHABELITZ

of girls rattled typewriters in the secondfloor loft of the dingy old building in which Lagg & Slater housed their business. The

first floor was the shipping department. The upper stories of the old factory were full of books-books in boxes and books in stacks piled up to the ceilings until their weight endangered the beams. Cargoes of books were continually in transit on the creaking freight-elevator. The floors and heavy wooden stairways were worn into hollows. The rough hand-rails of the stairways had been rubbed smooth and polished gray-black by the simple agency of the countless hands that had passed over them. The building was a typical old fire-trap held on long lease.

The rows of girls in Lagg & Slater's second floor were not selected like chorusgirls, for their looks. They were hired to rattle typewriters, to rattle them fast all day, and to rattle them cheap. Nevertheless, some of them were extremely pretty.

Some of them were neatly dressed, several were overdressed, and some looked very poor. There were dark girls, blond girls, Jewish girls, young girls, and quite old girls with gray streaks and wrinkles. All of them punished their typewriters hard, addressing form letters, envelopes, and wrappers.

Lagg & Slater dealt in subscription books. You signed the little slip, and a few days later you got your set of Dickens, or Thackeray, or some other classica "classic" means a book on which the copyright has run out-and you paid a dollar down and a dollar a month until you were square, perhaps years later.

The prettiest girl on the second floor sat by herself in a corner of the wall and the partition that screened off the firm's

office. She was the partners' stenographer. She was very pretty in-deed, with a lovely fair head like a young Madonna. Her name was Alice Fond.

Alice was the partners' stenographer because of her ability, not because she was so pretty. Lagg & Slater did not prey among their employees. They were lean, hard-working, conscientious, grasping, driving, distrustful, exacting, suspicious, honest men and fathers of families.

Alice had a disappearing typewriterdesk by the unpainted pine door in the wooden partition. The door swung both ways. It was smudged all over with Bertillon records of masculine and feminine hands and thumbs and fingers. The other girls sat in rows on kitchen chairs at cheap tables. The firm's office took in the front windows, so the girls worked by electric lights, which hung in tin funnels over the typewriters.

The place was hot and close in winter, and very hot and close in summer. It had the regular factory smell of perspiration and human bodies too close together under roof. Coming in from outside, one got an impression of pretty girls' faces bent over typewriters; plain girls' faces; pretty bare arms; thin arms; hair; fussy hair; nice hair; hopeful girls; pale girls; girls sighing; girls stretching; round shoulders; flat shoulders; round chests; flat chests; casual displays of stockings; all the loss of privacy and exclusiveness that girls suffer when they go to work or play on the level of men.

When the noon whistle blew, the whole building drew a breath and exhaled girls in hats and jackets and men in working clothes. The girls were going to dairy The men carried tin pails and lunches.

seemed to be in a hurry.

Lagg & Slater were dyspeptic men with voracious appetites. They jumped up one March midday when the whistle sounded. Slater washed his hands; Lagg took an aluminum comb from his waist-coat pocket and roached up his hair. They snatched off their office-sleeves, tossed on their coats, and hot-footed for the business men's lunch, where they stowed away a big, greasy meal for fifty cents each.

Quick as they were, there were only a half-dozen girls in sight when the partners darted through the loft. The halfdozen were eating lunches brought with them. They were talking between bites of boiled egg and dill pickle, and the subject was one that is a favorite topic of the

female sex.

"We've got a swell fellow coming to live at our boarding-house," a cheerful, red-cheeked girl was saying. "And he's coming to look for a job here—honest! I told him to. He's a rich fellow that got sore and cut loose from his father. That's no kid—honest! There's a fellow lives in the house that's studying for a lawyer. He used to go to college with this fellow. He told us all about him. This fellow told his father that he could make his own money, and he's been trying to do it for almost two weeks. You'd die laughing to hear the lawyer tell about it."

"What's the young guy's name?" in-

quired Miss Pratt.

"His name's Brayton Welbore, so the lawyer told us; but, gee whiz, when he shows up at the boarding-house he says his name is James Roberts. The lawyer says he'd like us to call him that because he doesn't want to have people say he just got easy jobs because he was the son of his father."

"What has he done during the two

weeks?"

"You ought to hear the lawyer tell it. This young fellow told his father he'd get a job and make his own money. First he thought he'd sell automobiles. He's been to all the automobile places, but they rolled on the floor and laughed when he talked of going to work. One place thought they'd try him out. He took a man that wanted to buy a machine out for a sample ride, and got sore at something the man said; so he threw him out and went and got a load of girls, and had a dickens of a time and smashed the car.

Naturally they fired him. After he'd made himself the joke of Automobile Row trying to get a job, he tackled the brokers' offices down on Wall Street. They couldn't do anything with him. He didn't have the first notion of making himself useful, the lawyer said. He just walked around, and if a customer spoke to him without an introduction this fellow would act like the customer had some contagious disease. If any of his girls called him up, why, he would rush to the telephone and make his dates, and drop everything, and go and attend to the girl. He must be some guy, believe me! And the lawyer said that all the time this fellow has been carrying on and staying up all night and running up auto bills and restaurant bills just the same as ever; and now he's almost broke, so he's come to the boarding-house to live for the sake of economy.

"Has he got any job now, Kitty?"

"No more job than a rabbit. I said to him, I says: 'Say, Mr. Roberts, come on down to our place and you can get a job. Any well-dressed fellow can get a trial with us. Come on,' I said. And he swore he would come to-day. Keep a lookout for him, girls! He's the swellest fellow I ever saw, take it from me. He's the real cheese!"

"Lemme get my glass of water offen Miss Fond's desk, Kitty," said Miss Pratt. "Here she comes. Excuse me for using your desk, Miss Fond. I didn't ex-

pect you back so soon."

"That's all right," said Alice. "Don't take it off—it isn't bothering me. The half past whistle hasn't blown yet. The sun's awfully hot. It's almost too warm for a jacket."

Alice passed on to hang up her things

and get back to her work.

#### II

Brayton Welbore was a product of a great university. On second thought that's scarcely fair to the great university, but let it stand.

Brayton's father planned at the outset that the young man should not go to the university with a huge allowance and be a big money-spender while an undergraduate. He put Brayton on a moderate stipend with certain restrictions and stipulations. For instance, Mr. Welbore would pay for Brayton's clothes, books, and so

forth, but Brayton must pay his own current expenses, such as his laundry, out of his allowance.

These and other safeguards were intended to make Brayton conservative. So Brayton never had any laundry done; he said he couldn't afford it. He bought Welbore would get the tailor's bill in due course. He chuckled and paid. He thought Brayton was a good joker to get to windward of him in that way. Mr. Welbore owned mills, thousands of acres of timber, mountains full of iron and copper ore, lines of steamers, and such things.



" WALK RIGHT IN, MR. ROBERTS

new undergarments and new shirts right straight along, and sold the used ones to the other fellows.

Whenever he thought he was short of money he would take some of his friends to his tailor's to get some clothes made. They would settle with Brayton at whatever price was convenient, and the elder Brayton would have a hard time making him squirm with any college bills!

As time wore on after Brayton's graduation, Mr. Welbore still paid the bills, but he ceased to chuckle. He didn't mind how much money Brayton threw around, but he wanted him to be something besides a waster.

At the end of his patience, after many disregarded warnings, he called Brayton on the carpet and threw the gaff into him right and proper. He accused him of desiring to be a sponge all his life, and asked him if he ever intended to be a man. He wound up by ordering him to go immediately to Milltown and get down to work in the Welbore cement-works.

This was hardly fair, after half a dozen years of senseless indulgence. Brayton was angered. He refused to go to Milltown. He said that he could earn his own money, and that he would stay right in

town and prove it.

"Tut-tut, Brayton!" said his father. "You will do as I tell you. You are welcome to stay in town as long as you pay your own expenses. Inasmuch as you never earned a dollar in your life, I think I can figure about how long you will stay. Whoever gets you to work will have to chloroform you before he backs you into the shafts. I'm the only one that can break you in, and I'm going to do it. Now listen; if you borrow any money, I shall have to pay it back, but I will do so in such a way that you won't care to borrow any more. So I advise you not to do that. Here is a check for five hundred dollars. You see, I'm not sending you away broke, but I'm giving you this check to take you to Milltown, and for no other purpose. You are not to cash it until you start. Now, then, buckle down to work. Let me hear good reports from you."

Brayton took the check automatically, verified the sum and signature with a hasty glance, and folded the slip and put it into his pocket. It was as natural for him to reach out and take a check from his father's hand as it is for a nestling to open its bill to receive a worm from the

parent bird.

"I'm not going to Milltown, sir," said Brayton. "It would not be honest to de-

ceive you."

"You'll go!" retorted his father. "Don't cash that check until you leave."

Brayton departed from the breakfastroom, walking stiffly, and wavering somewhat on his well-shod feet, because he had been summoned from bed after only two hours of rest. His father did not know it, but Brayton had a good deal of cash on hand besides the five-hundred-dollar check. He had plenty of credit, and he was not likely to go to Milltown as long as he found it more entertaining elsewhere. He saw the affair as another large joke.

#### Ш

About half past three there was a sudden stir among the girls in Lagg & Slater's loft. All heads turned, and Kitty Myers looked up suddenly as a shadow fell across her typewriter at the end of one of the rows. It was Brayton Welbore, bending over her, and smiling most agreeably.

Brayton liked the place. A whole roomful of girls—he was right in his element!

"Here I am, Miss Myers," said Brayton; "an industrious and capable young man, James Roberts by name. Doesn't that sound straightforward and honest to you—James Roberts? It inspires confidence, does it not?"

"Go right on in, Mr. Roberts," grinned Kitty delightedly. "Push right in, and say you saw their ad for agents. Gee, I hope you get on! Push right in."

Brayton walked on past the rows of girls, looking them over and classifying them rapidly. He stopped to read one of the warnings, printed in block type and posted on every wall and stairway, adjuring employees not to smoke because of the danger of fire. The danger was made real and imminent by the notice ending snappily with the information that any employee violating the order would be fired on the spot.

When Brayton came to Alice, by the door, he paused, struck with real aston-

ishment.

"How did this Kohinoor of girls get in

here?" he asked himself.

Alice looked up at Brayton. As she met his eyes, her hands stopped and trembled over the rapid keys. She rose. It was one of her duties to receive persons wishing to interview the firm.

"Did you wish to see somebody, sir?"

she asked.

Alice was a tall girl with slender, white hands, serious, gray eyes, a straight nose, and a lovely mouth. She had real distinction. For almost the first time in her life she was under the inspection of a connoisseur.

"If you please," said Brayton, "I'd like to see some member of the firm with reference to employment. James Roberts is the name; an honest and capable young man—a brief description of the applicant might be desirable."

"Just a minute," requested Alice, smiling slightly as she stepped through the swinging pine door. "Walk right in, Mr. Roberts," she said, returning a moment later.

"Thank you!"

Brayton held the door for her, saw her seated, and then strolled into the upper

regions.

The firm's office was a strip across the front of the loft. A shelf the length of the partition held specimens of the books that Lagg & Slater were selling. The partners sat back to back at old-fashioned flat desks under the windows. There was room at the end of the strip for a big old safe, a coat-closet, a wash-stand, and rows of file-cases reaching to the ceiling.

Outside the windows the rusty iron railing of the fire-escape ran across the front of the building. The glass was dirty, and so was the bare floor. There was a three-foot passageway between the desks and

the long shelf.

Lagg and Slater were in their shirtsleeves, plowing away at the papers piled up before them, when Brayton approached, radiating an atmosphere that could be sensed of health, wealth, strength, and animal spirits. Lagg's eyes opened as Brayton drew near. Slater revolved his swivel chair to look at the seeker for employment.

Young Mr. Welbore was a tall man, thick-necked and muscular, with broad shoulders and big hands. He had smooth, light hair, and a handsome, cheerful, ag-

gressive face.

What struck Lagg at once was the costly perfection of the stranger's clothes. Brayton's haberdashery had the faultlessness that only comes with large sums of money. His suit, his heavy-hooked Malacca stick, his gloves, his London hat, his boots from the cunning hand of his own bootmaker - all were quiet and tasteful, vet all absolutely reeked of wealth. Plenty of job-hunters approached Lagg dressed up to beat four of a kind, but they were shoddy imitations, shouting fraud, while everything about Brayton was obviously the real thing and the most expensive. It is vulgar to enumerate such facts, but that is exactly what Lagg did.

"Have a seat," invited Lagg, although he usually let men looking for work make themselves comfortable on their legs. "Have a seat. So you think you could sell books for us? Did you ever sell anything?"

"I practically earned my own expenses through college by selling things," replied Brayton modestly.

"What did you sell?" inquired Lagg,

with curiosity.

"Men's clothing and haberdashery, chiefly."

"Suits and gents' furnishings, you

mean?"

"That's it."
"What kinds?"

"Everything — suits, overcoats, raincoats, sweaters, golf-clubs, shirts, socks, pajamas, underclothes of all kinds, neckties, gloves, belts, mufflers, umbrellas, canes, hats. I sold a lot of garters and shoe-laces—nothing too large or too small when I was out for the money. Not shoes," Brayton added with delicate honesty. "I didn't sell any shoes."

"Dear me!" said Lagg. "How much

did you sell?"

"I sometimes took in four and five hundred dollars a month."

"Not bad. How much did you make

on that?"

"That was all net profit," said Brayton. "I sold the things mighty cheap, too—silk shirts a dollar apiece, and suits from the best tailor in town for fifteen and twenty dollars. I did a whale of a business."

"This man is a liar by the clock. That's evident," said Lagg inwardly.

Slater's sharp eyes, through the holes of his eye-shade, bored into Brayton.

"Any references?" Lagg said aloud.

"Not a solitary one."

"I'll have to ask you to leave a deposit on your samples."

"Sure thing!"

"We've got a big job of sets of Hugo in brown cloth on hand. Put them ahead. Remember, Hugo."

"Who's he?"

" Victor Hugo."

"Oh, one of those Spanish authors, I

guess!"

"What college did you say you went to?" inquired Lagg. "Never mind. I never heard of a man who knew anything about books that could sell them. You may make good. I'll give you a chance. Mr. Stein will give you your samples and instructions. Miss Fond!" Lagg shouted for Alice. Brayton was absorbed in



"won't you stop-throwing yourself away so-so wickedly-so dreadfully?"

looking at her as soon as she entered. "Miss Fond will show you where to go, Mr. Roberts. Pitch in now and make a lot of sales. You may go with Miss Fond, Mr. Roberts. All right, Mr. Roberts!"

Brayton woke up, saluted the partners, and followed Alice out.

"That fellow's name ain't Roberts any more than mine is," whispered Slater.

"He didn't answer to it like it was his," acknowledged Lagg.

"He's some kind of a crook. That's what I put him down as—a crook. I think you made a mistake hiring him."

"What do I care? Let him rob banks all night if he'll sell books enough in the daytime. He's a natural salesman, I'll bet on that."

"He's a crook just the same. I never heard such lies as he told about selling truck at college. Gee, such lies! You keep your eye on him. He'll be trying some crooked work with bum checks, or something like that, as sure as you're born. He's a smooth worker of some sort. Look at his clothes! He never came by that layout by hard work. You keep watch of him."

"I'll watch him, all right! He's got some kind of a game, I guess; but if he's going to stick here he'll have to sell books. He can't put anything over on us. In the first place, he won't have a chance; and in the second, if he tries anything, I'll slap him in the penitentiary so quick he won't have time to bat an eye!"

Alice heard this conversation through a little square hole in the partition, which had been made for convenience in summoning her when one of the partners desired to dictate. She was stunned and horrified, but it invested Brayton thenceforth with an awful terror and mystery in her eyes.

ALICE

She watched him, when she had opportunity, with sad and frightened speculation as to what his specialty in crime might be. It seemed too dreadful that such a man as Brayton, with his unfailing considerateness and his beautiful, stately, courtesy, should be a man hunted by the law.

Her gentle heart was full of pity for the splendid lost one. She wished ardently that she might do something to draw him back from the abyss.

#### TV

Brayton was surprisingly constant to Lagg & Slater. He reported at least once a day, sometimes oftener. He came to feast his eyes on Alice. At first he declared this frankly to himself; then he denied it, but later he made no bones about it. This was when he began to come twice a day, and to hasten to Alice's desk like a homing pigeon.

He hung around Alice. He took her to lunch. He sent flowers to her boardinghouse. Kitty Myers and her friends were

quick to observe his devotion.

"Let that smarty Miss Fond, with her desk by herself, make up to him if she wants to!" said Kitty. "I wouldn't tell her anything about him. Let her find out for herself, if she's so smart!"

Another surprise about Brayton was that he sold books. For Alice's sake he pushed the sale of Hugo. He obtained recognition for the French author.

It was not that any such upheaval of nature took place as that Brayton went about ringing door-bells. Neither did he mouse through office-buildings, sneaking past doors and percolating into rooms where people were at work. No clerk ever looked up from his desk, startled by the appearance of a volume of Hugo shoved under his nose, to find standing beside him a tall, handsome stranger with a blank contract in his hand. Brayton left his samples in his rooms at his college club. His pals signed up for the Balzacs and the Thackerays, sight unseen. They didn't know about Alice, but they were with Brayton in his struggle.

Bets were made on how long he would keep it up. It was understood that somebody must buy a set of books every day. Brayton's taxicab chauffeur ordered a Dickens, for which Brayton paid himself. His favorite head waiter begged permission to put himself down for a twelve-volume Shakespeare. The contracts were passed around with the coffee when Brayton was with his friends.

At other times Brayton would order a few sets delivered at his own quarters to various assumed names. When he came in at night he would break his shins over some new case of books that had arrived during the day. He didn't have room to sit down, he was so jammed up with literature. He made presents of books instead of flowers and candy. There were dozens of sets of Trollope and Hawthorne kicking around the dressing-rooms at the Winter Garden.

One of the finest features about the business he brought in to Lagg & Slater's was that it was virtually all cash. Brayton was not the kind to bother about arranging for instalment collections. When his friends put their names down, they passed over checks or currency to complete the transactions, Brayton assuring them that it was the best money they ever spent in their lives, and that if they would read the books they'd broaden their minds and know something.

For his own purchases under assumed names, Brayton would toss the bills across the cashier's counter at Lagg & Slater's. The cashier would hand him back the

change and his commission.

Brayton's funds were getting low, but he wasn't quite broke. He had had a chunky roll of bills under his pillow on the morning when his father gave him the check to go to Milltown. He had plenty of spare cigarette-cases, chains, pins, fitted pigskin bags, clothes, sleeve-links, silver dressing-sets, and such collateral. University life is a stern school, but it makes men—men who know how to raise the stuff on their personal belongings. It makes men who know better than to fritter away money for things that can be charged.

Brayton could last for some time longer before he would have to throw up the sponge, cash the five-hundred-dollar check, and report at the cement-works. He had unlimited scope with his garage, with florists, and other tradesmen, and at the places he most frequented. Of course, he wore out a good many pencils scrawling his initials across the bills when the waiters brought them to him; but the only heavy drain on his cash supply was the sets of books he bought from Lagg & Slater.

Lagg grinned when he looked at the slips. His instinct told him plainly enough that there was something wrong with Brayton, but as a salesman, Lagg insisted with reason, the records showed that the young dude was all there.

SLATER's theory that Brayton was not on the level received confirmation one night when a publisher's representative, who was trying to sell the firm a car-load of Scotts that had been run off from a worn set of plates, took Slater to a show and afterward to a cabaret on Longacre Square. Slater no sooner got settled where he could see and hear than his eyes fell on Brayton and a lively party at a round table on the opposite side of the dancing

Brayton's young married sister chaperoned the party, which included two very striking girls. Slater concealed himself behind a pillar and observed them, drawing his own conclusions as to their character. With eager eye he noted the things that were brought to that table, trying to pick them out on his menu so as to see what they cost. He watched the busy waiters and the assiduous dining-room chief. He pricked up his ears like a bird-dog when he saw one of Lagg & Slater's contracts handed around, while everybody at the round table laughed, Brayton loudest of all.

Like the old sleuth he was, Slater pussyfooted to the door when the party left, and saw them get into two big motor-cars. He peeped under the sidewalk man's arm, and saw Brayton giving the directions to the drivers.

"There's been a big haul somewhere!" said Slater to himself.

He came back to his table and asked his waiter to call the dining-room chief. Slater asked the man if he knew Mr. Roberts, one of the people who had just left. The chief did not know any Mr. Roberts.

Slater's last doubt vanished. He knew that he was in for a bout of dyspepsia from the late hours and dissipation, but he was glad, just the same, that he had accepted the invitation. He told Lagg the next morning of what he had seen.

"Brazen, loudly dressed women, covered with expensive jewels, the booty of the gang's thieving operations, no doubt. Flashy-looking men spending their money like water. A typical bunch of high-class criminals!"

So Slater described the party. Alice had her ear to the opening in the partition,

and her cheeks whitened.

"The fellow's pulled off some big robbery or swindle, beyond all question. How could he mix into a spread like that on the thirty or forty dollars a week he gets here? He was plainly the leader of the band. If he was on the square, how could he dress the way he does? Where does the money come from? We ought to get rid of him.' urged Slater. "It's dangerous to keep him in our employment, when we know what

"I don't care if he's the biggest thief in New York, as long as he brings in orders

the way he does," said Lagg.

"Remember, Lagg, we've had more than one bogus-check grafter among our canvassers."

"I'm watching him," answered Lagg. "The first break he makes, I'll have him behind the bars. He can't hurt us. Meanwhile, there isn't a day he doesn't turn in orders. I only wish every crook in New York was on our pay-roll and bringing in the business like this fellow!"

Alice trembled. She had an engagement to go to lunch with Brayton at twelve thirty. They had been for a good many evening automobile spins. Alice suffered to think that perhaps Brayton obtained the money for these by the frightful

risks of his other profession.

They had supped together. Alice, fascinated, wishing to be anywhere else, terrified by Brayton's sinister reputation, could not get her balance in the glittering restaurants. She saw that Brayton quietly saluted members of gay parties, and that slight greetings, possibly secret signs of recognition, passed between him and other men.

Once the policeman at the curb spoke Alice almost fell. to Brayton. gripped Brayton's arm. He answered the officer boldly, and Alice shuddered at his

"Please let's go to some little, cheap place," begged Alice on this day, still shaken by Slater's recital. "I don't want so much as you usually get for me. I'm happier with a sandwich and a glass of

Alice's sweet, gray eyes were tearful. She wanted to ask Brayton about the cab-



"I LEARNED TO-DAY THAT THAT FIVE-HUNDRED-DOLLAR CHECK NEVER WAS PRESENTED AT OUR BANK. WHERE DID YOU CASH IT?"

aret party, but she did not dare. At any rate, Slater had not said that he seemed to pay any special attention to the women.

"I'll go anywhere you wish. I'll do anything you say," Brayton said in his deep voice, which shook a little. "I only want to please you."

Brayton was getting most awfully gone on Alice Fond. He realized it, but he simply couldn't stop. He wished to be with her all the time. No other girl in the world was like Alice.

# VI

"THANK you for this," said Alice, when they sat opposite each other at the narrow little porcelain-topped table against the tiled wall of the dairy restaurant.

"Oh, I wish I could ask you somethingnot for myself, but for you!"

"You know there's nothing you could ask me that I wouldn't do," murmured

Brayton.

"Will you let me ask you to do something? Will you? Won't you change your-your way of life? Won't you stop -throwing yourself away so-so wickedly so dreadfully? Oh, please stop now, before it is too late!"

"You don't realize how much I have changed already," replied Brayton huski-"It's because of you I'm changing. I'm trying to work a little; but I don't know how. I never did any honest work

in all my life."

Alice could hardly restrain her tears. A diamond drop glittered on her dark eye-

lashes.

"I'm so happy," she whispered, "so profoundly, so prayerfully happy to hear that! You'll keep on trying, won't you? Tell me that you will. Oh, if only you weren't accustomed to spending so frightfully much money! Could you be brave enough to spend only what you earned?"

"I'm almost tempted to try," muttered Brayton, hanging his head before her. "I wish I could! It's hard to change the only ways I know."

"Wouldn't you be happier," continued Alice courageously, now that she had broken the ice; "wouldn't you be happier to be proud of yourself, and to have real friends who would admire you and respect

you for what you are?"

"I've thought of it since I've known You've made me think." Brayton looked down at his hands. "But even my little experience here has shown me that if I tried to reform my ways, and live on what I honestly earned, why, I should

"Try it-please try it! You don't have to have automobiles. You don't have to spend all that money in excitements. You don't have to have all those expensive things you wear. I don't see how you can be happy with them," said Alice firmly, "when you know that you have no right to the money that paid for them."

"The money that I spend doesn't come from anybody that will ever miss it,"

Brayton defended himself.

"Oh, I wish you could see how dreadful it is for you to argue in that way and really to think it justifies you! It shows such a warped, wrong, perverted point of view. Don't you see that no matter where it comes from, we have a right only to what we honestly make ourselves? brave, strong man like you ought to be ashamed to touch anything he did not earn."

"Little friend," said Brayton, "how could I ask a girl like you to bother with me unless I could at least send her a box of flowers, or take her out in my car sometimes, to show my appreciation of her goodness in wasting her time on me?"

"Do you think such things would make any difference to me?" cried Alice. "I will be your friend through thick and thin, because it's you. You will never see me

fail you!"

Brayton walked back to the warehouse with Alice, conscious of a rush of stronger feeling than he had ever known. There had been plenty of girls in his experience, but he had never felt as he felt now. When Alice turned her gray eyes on him, something in his being responded like harpstrings vibrating. He felt that he was being carried off his feet.

He left her at the door, went over to a café that he usually liked, and took a table

in a corner.

"Anything—any old thing," he told s waiter. "Bring me any old junk, his waiter.

Charley, and leave me alone.

Brayton spread out his last five-dollar bill and looked at it. Beside it he laid the five-hundred-dollar check that his father gave him to go to Milltown.

"I've got to get away from here," he said to himself. "I've got to clear out right away. This is getting hold of me. I'll be making a fool of myself, or else doing something that's too rotten to think of. I'll go to-day! I won't go back to Lagg & Slater's at all. I'll stop myself now. I won't allow myself ever to see her again!"

Brayton kept pledging himself to this as he went through the motions of eating what was brought him. Half-way through his coffee he set the cup down, tossed the five-dollar bill to Charley, and rushed back to Lagg & Slater's as fast as his feet would

bear him.

Neither of the partners was in the office when Brayton pushed in, but Alice stood by Lagg's desk, sorting a bundle of letters. Brayton did not speak. Seeing his expression, Alice laid the letters in the wicker basket and stood facing him.

She was nearly as tall as he. Brayton took her in his arms. Alice offered no resistance. He turned her face to his and pressed his lips on hers, and for the first time in his life Brayton's soul drank deep and deep. He was shaking and weak when he released her at the sound of a step out-

"I've got to go away from here," he groaned. "I've got to make my escape before something bad happens. I've got to get out of here quick. Little girl, this is good-by!"

What? What is it?" stam-Why?

mered Alice.

"I can't explain. Don't ask me!" Alice hurriedly went out as Lagg and Slater came in from the stock-room.

"Will you get a check cashed for me?" Brayton asked.

"How much is it?" asked Lagg.

" Five hundred."

Slater pinched Lagg's arm. "Who's it drawn by?"
James S. Welbore."

"Do you know him?"

" I've known him all my life."

"I see it's drawn on our bank. I'll send it there for you."

Brayton's face was white. Lines were in his cheeks, and his jaw looked angular.

Lagg gave a hard look at him.

Alice saw the men's faces and heard the conversation through her pigeonhole in the partition. She was so intent that she hardly had time to get in position before her typewriter when Lagg and Slater came out together and stood behind her.

"What did I say?" hissed Slater. "That check's been raised, or else it's an out-and-out forgery. Don't indorse it! Just let Miss Fond take it to the bank. I'll have two policemen here to arrest him."

".Take this check, Miss Fond," directed "Tell the bank people that you know it is a forgery, and that you only bring it to them so as to make the case complete. After they see it, hurry back here."

Alice took the check. So this was what was the matter with Brayton! She never doubted that some sudden peril had forced him to raise money and fly.

She went out, took a cab to the savingsbank where she kept her savings, and drew five hundred dollars-every cent she had in the world.

She was back in twenty minutes. Brayton was waiting by the window in the office. Two heavy-set men were outside, lurking by Alice's desk, as she passed in. Alice went up to Lagg and laid the money before him.

"Here is the cash for Mr. Roberts," she

Lagg's jaw dropped.

"What did they say at the bank?" he whispered.

"They said the check was all right and the signature correct," she replied.

Lagg silently held the bills out to Brayton. He took them, stuffed them in his pocket, and departed quickly, without a word or a look at any one.

"That fellow's too deep for us, that's all!" declared Slater, after watching him to the street. "The detectives said they didn't know him. I'll look in at the bank in a day or two, and see what happened to the check when it was cleared."

### VII

SLATER came back from his call at the bank, several days later, and had a scowling conversation with Lagg. At the end of

it he called Alice in.
"Miss Fond," he said, "I learned to-day that that five-hundred-dollar check never was presented at our bank. Where did you cash it?"

" I-I'd prefer not to say." "I wish to know all about it."

"Please excuse me from telling you, Mr. Slater," said Alice, beginning to weep, Slater chewed his penholder, but not in uncertainty; he had made up his mind. Lagg had kept Brayton because he got orders, but this girl didn't get any orders.

"I'll have to let you go," he said. "I've had enough of this affair. I don't understand your connection with it, but your silence looks bad. That's all I can savit looks bad. I don't want any further connection with that party, and so I'm going to let you go. I'm sorry not to be able to give you a recommendation, but that's your own fault. Here is an order for a week's pay. Please leave immediately."

Alice tried to get another job. It was not possible to get a good one, without a recommendation from her last employer, She took what she could get.

Desperately lonely and unhappy, she fell ill and lost her position. She couldn't get another. Her money was gone, and

gone, too, her character as a faithful and honest girl.

## VIII

Brayton went to Milltown and worked there so well that in two months his father called him back to the city. The superintendent reported to Mr. Welbore that Brayton stayed in his room nights, and paid no attention to the village belles. Mr. Welbore was afraid that the young man was ill

Brayton wrote to Alice. His letters were returned from Lagg & Slater's marked "not here." He stole a trip to New York over Sunday, but Alice's former landlady told him that the girl had lost her place at Lagg & Slater's and had gone away, leaving no address.

Brayton tried a guarded personal in the newspapers, and even employed a detective agency. He knew what he wanted

now; he wanted Alice.

He kept up his search and ground away at his work; that was what Alice had wished. His father praised him for his

steadiness and efficiency.

"I'll tell you what did it, sir," said Brayton. "It was a girl I met in that bum book establishment. She was a bully girl—a dandy girl! She wised me up to a few things. She made me see myself. She told me a rich loafer was the same as a thief. I've lost track of her. She isn't there any more. I'm trying to find her."

"Don't get yourself tangled up with a working girl," advised Mr. Welbore.

"This was no usual girl. She was a beauty, sir, in every way. I want to see her again. If she doesn't look as good to me as I think she will, then I'll know there's nothing in the girl proposition."

Along in June a singular message was received by the elder Welbore from the investigating department of the Associated

Charities. It read:

ALICE FOND, twenty-five, white, unmarried, stenographer, found starving in hall room in Second Avenue. Has check for five hundred dollars

signed "James S. Welbore." Refuses to cash or surrender check. Was found trying to burn same. Please give any information possible.

Mr. Welbore was in two minds about letting Brayton know before he investigated. Finally he decided that concealment would be bad, and sent his secretary to call Brayton from the outer office.

He had a hard time keeping up with Brayton in the young man's rush for the elevator after he saw the memorandum. They piled into Mr. Welbore's car, and Brayton ordered full speed for Second

Avenue.

Alice was in care of a nurse from the charities. Brayton dropped on one knee beside her bed, while his father looked at the check in spite of Alice's weak protests.

"It belongs to Mr. Roberts," she said.
"It is his. It never has been presented at any bank. No one has been harmed by it. Please let him take it now and tear it up!"

"This is the check I gave you to go to Milltown, Brayton," exclaimed Mr. Welbore. "You told me you cashed it. Why didn't you make use of it, Miss Fond?"

"Is it good?" asked Alice.

"Why, certainly," cried Mr. Welbore.
"Why, certainly. I gave it to my son. I understand he was unwise enough to call himself 'Roberts' while he was in the employment of those booksellers."

"They said it was a forgery. They had policemen waiting," said Alice, and burst

into tears.

"Do you mean you cashed that check with your own money and suppressed it to

protect my son?"

Alice did not answer. Her head was on Brayton's shoulder, and he was whispering in her ear. He replied to his father's question.

"You wouldn't need to ask, if you knew her," he said. "This is Alice that I told you about, and that's the way you can

depend on her!"

"I depended on you," breathed Alice.
"I knew you'd come and find me!"

### THE GAME

Life and Death, these played a game
With man as pawn on the board of time.
"I win!" cried Death. "A corpse I claim!"
"And I," said Life, "a soul sublime!"



# FELLOW SUFFERERS

A N otter or two and a harmless mink, An innocent fox, it is sad to think, As well as a couple of healthy bears, Were skinned for the furs that my lady wears.

I'd pity the poor skinned things, I would— I'd pity them all, if I honestly could; But for these very furs which I've had to buy, The one that was properly skinned was I!

Joseph P. Hanrahan

H. V. Martin

### ROMANCE AND REALITY

WHEN the ruffian grabbed the maiden in the moving-picture play—
When the villain seized the heroine, what did they really say?
Did she scream, "Unhand me, monster!" Did he hiss, "Aha, me beaut!

At last I have you in me power!"—and she:
"Avaunt, you brute!"

Ah, no, my gentle reader! Quoth he: "Why, hello, Bess,

You're the sweetest girl in Filmland, that I surely must confess!

May I call at eight this evening? Can I be your steady man?"

And the leading lady simpered as she said: "You bet you can!"

# A BALLADE OF FAVORITE SPORTS

S OME souls there are whom games attract—
For which recall your Q. Horatius.
These love a sward by golf-clubs hacked,
Those are at polo swift, audacious.
And some are fishers pertinacious
Who play the trout and spear the tunny;
Yet who has found pastime more gracious
Than this—the sport of spending money?

Some, who advantages have lacked, Diversion find in feasts crustaceous, And plays—I'm loath to state the fact— Whose humor is a hint salacious. Some simple folk boast pets sagacious—
Their horse, their dog, or eke their bunny;
One theme makes me, like them, loquacious—
'Tis this, the sport of spending money.

Some, well I wis, have joys abstract—
Pursue the true, smite the mendacious.
They thrill to see an error whacked,
Delight in argument pugnacious.
And some love solitude, the spacious,
Or Arcady, all milk and honey;
I sing a pleasure less herbaceous—
Tis this, the sport of spending money.

One needs not muscles iron-packed
To triumph in this game vivacious;
No player for old age is sacked,
For faulty wind or sight fallacious,
Or for a temper contumacious.
One needs no wardrobe freakish, funny;
What sport of "form" is less tenacious
Than this—the sport of spending money?

#### ENVOY

Prince, were but merchants less rapacious—
Were trade but open-hearted, sunny,
Or purses all well-lined, capacious,
What sport so blithe as spending money?

Anne O'Hagan

### AFTER TWENTY YEARS

#### I

BESIDE the blazing kitchen-range, aglow with crimson lids, Sam Hadley and Maria sat and talked about the kids. Sam, he was crowding thirty-eight, and looked a trifle more, while Mrs. Sam was slightly gray, though only thirty-four.

"This farmin's mighty up-hill work! Now don't you reckon, maw, that Billy, with his gift o' gab, would make a hit at law?"

"Indeed he would," says Mrs. Sam; "and, as I've said before, our Tommy's smooth at figurin' and ought to own a store."

"And Dick," says Sam, "can size up men; he's firm, yet not a crank; he's got a careful, level head, and ought to run a bank."

"Our Susie has a better voice than most kids of her age; it seems to me," says Mrs. Sam, "she'd star upon the stage." Sam Hadley raised his corn-cob pipe, and Mrs. Sam her spool; they vowed they'd work their knuckles bare to send the kids to school!

#### H

Beside the blazing kitchen-range, aglow with crimson lids, Sam Hadley and Maria sat and talked about the kids. Sam, he was crowding fifty-eight, and getting older fast, while Mrs. Sam was grayer, too, than when we saw her last.

"Our Billy's written home for dough, and don't you reckon, maw, that we could send a little more while things are slow at law?"

"Indeed we can," says Mrs. Sam; "and Tom has written, too, that goods ain't movin' in the store, and we must help him through."

"I had a word to-day from Dick; the bank has gone kerflunks, and, maw, to put it on its feet, Dick needs a thousand plunks."

"And, Sam, our Susie and her man have had an awful fuss, and Susie and her little ones are goin' to live with us. Oh, won't it seem like heaven, Sam, with her sweet voice at home! We'll eddicate her little ones, like we have done our own!"

Sam Hadley raised his corn-cob pipe, and Mrs. Sam her spool; they vowed they'd send their kids' the cash, and Susie's kids to school!

J. E. Tuft

## THE TOUCH

THE earth was told by some wise friend That gold was at the rainbow's end;

So, craving shekels overmuch, It humped itself to make a touch.

The earth, as usual, was broke; In honeyed accents thus it spoke:

"Old chap, I haven't got a red; Just hear my children cry for bread!

"If you will lend that pot of gold I'll pay you back a hundredfold."

The rainbow faded from the sky, Remarking, as it said good-by:

"Too bad, old scout, in vain you speak—
I loaned that buck to Mars last week!"

McLandburgh Wilson

### TO AN ANTIQUE STILETTO

WHAT grim adventures has this dagger known?

How much of blood and terror has it drunk? Into how many bosoms has it sunk Bringing swift death with scarce a sigh or moan? Tyrants, perchance, this blade has overthrown Amid their sins, unshriven by the monk; Under its touch vast projects may have shrunk Into a bleeding body, lying prone.

How many murderous hands have gripped this

How many lovers, as they kissed and laughed, Have perished as this weapon came in play? Not many—for this ancient-looking blade Was manufactured for the antique trade In Worcester, Massachusetts, U. S. A.

Berton Braley

### TO MIDAS

A LTHOUGH your power is great to-day,
To-morrow it is gone, for learn
That "dust to dust" is nature's way,
And you to gold-dust must return!

Harold Susman

#### THE MIDNIGHT OIL

S AID her aunt: "You are pale with study;
Too long over books you toil.
Now tell me, haven't you, Edith,
Been burning the midnight oil?"

And the studious girl admitted,
With a blush, 'twas even so;
"But," said she, "'twas only a little,
For we turned the light down low!"

Eugene C. Dolson

### A DOMESTIC COMEDY

MY wife and I have sundry spats; We meet in wordy battles, And wrangle like a pair of cats Until the casement rattles.

I find the biscuits rather tough, And then let out a grumble; It isn't much, but just enough To start a family jumble.

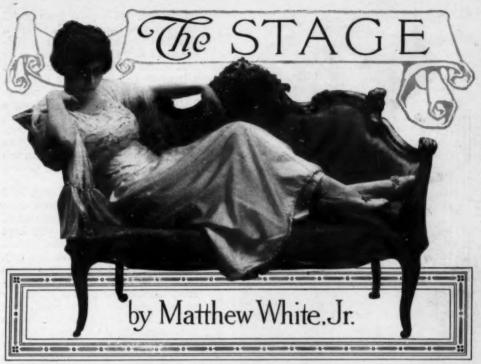
My wife then poses, proud and grand, And makes dire threats of leaving; And I, poor simp, can't understand That she's just make-believing.

I rant around and tear my hair And try my heart to harden; Then go cavorting down the stair And out into the garden.

I soon return, with humble plea— Her threats do sorely grieve me— And there, upon my bended knee, Implore her not to leave me.

Then, when she's kissed away my fears,
And in my arms I fold her,
She sheds a quart of briny tears
Upon my brawny shoulder!

Harry J. Williams



DOROTHY PHILLIPS, LEADING WOMAN WITH THE VICTOR BRAND OF THE UNIVERSAL MOTION PICTURES

From a photograph by Floyd, New York

THE PROBLEM OF THE MOVIES

HAT is to be the outcome? Where is this movie business going to end? Or should it be, when is it going to end?

Strange question, you may say, when the motion-picture industry appears to be carrying everything before it. But stop and think a bit. Recall the number of wellknown plays and stories you personally know about that have already been screened, some of them going back as far as "Les Misérables," by Victor Hugo, to say nothing of Shakespeare's "Hamlet." Or take it from another side. One motionpicture concern, the Vitagraph, had up to the 1st of July made three thousand productions, and its director has announced that its output is to go on at a faster rate than ever before. And this is only one of the many American companies, and new ones are constantly starting up.

If the stories of the past are being used up twice or thrice as quickly as suitable new ones are being placed on the market and this is undoubtedly the case—what are the film people going to do for subjects ten years hence, or perhaps five years hence?

But does not the same thing apply to the magazine world, to the theater, you ask? By no means. The magazine comes out but twelve times a year; a new play is put on with the hope that there is life in it for a run in one city of at least one or two hundred performances. On the other hand, most of the moving-picture theaters change their whole program every night in the week, Sundays included; and with the capacity that exists to duplicate films, there is no very extensive "road" route left for a photoplay after its local territory is exhausted.

Revivals in picture-land are few and far between. I am told that the John Bunny pictures became as dead as John Bunny himself as soon as he had passed away. Novelty, something new, is the constant cry.

No wonder that the actors who chance to make a hit in the film business demand and get big prices. Every exhibitor wants them at once, well knowing that a little later, except in rare instances, nobody will want

LAURA HAMILTON, WHO IS VIOLET BRINTON IN "NOBODY HOME"

From a shotogrash by White, New York

them at all. Five years from now I dare say you won't be able to sell a Charlie Chaplin release to a nickel-odeon in Red Cloud, Arizona.

It is said De Wolf Hopper will get a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars for a year's work posing. This seems an almost unbelievable amount, but if one company didn't pay it, another might; and, of course, the concern that has secured him expects to get its money back in less than three months after the picures

are put on the market.

And Hopper will have to work hard to earn it. As I said last month, there is a fascination about seeing oneself on the screen; but after you have once been an actor in the spoken drama, with rehearsals that last only a few weeks at most, there is an awful grind about getting up early every morning for what is practically an unbroken series of rehearsals. And with such a delicate instrument as a camera to depend on, posing involves an amount of waiting that is agony to people with as high-strung nerves as player folk usually possess.

To go back to the matter of scenario supply, a French director, who is in this country just now, voices the fear that lurks in every movie man's heart, when he says:

"What we need for the cinema is authors. There are no real screen authors. A new sort of creative literary brain must be developed for filmdom."

Already the big companies are husbanding their resources by means of the serial picture. Given one set of characters, a groundwork idea can be strung out to last fifteen or twenty weeks, according to its popularity. In this way, too, audiences become interested in the people playing the hero and the heroine, and extra money may be made by the exhibitors near the producing studios by advertising that on a certain night these actors will be present in person and will appear before the screen.

To be sure, when one comes to analyze the interest that centers around an exhibition of this sort, it somehow savors of the old-time dime museum, where certain exhibits had nothing to

do but allow themselves to be looked at craze and back to the flesh and blood perbecause they had been bitten by a mad sonalities? dog or had dived off Brooklyn Bridge. Certainly the motion picture is, at best, But those artists of the screen who have only a maimed type of drama. The spectabeen actors get away with the stunt in tors are again and again called upon to pretty good shape. fill gaps in the story where the lack The other night I saw Earle of speech makes the screen useless. Williams, the Tommy Barclay Seeing a photoplay is very much of "The Goddess," show him-self in this way. He has a like viewing the performance of a piece in a foreign language good voice, and after he had been introduced that one does not understand. Some day the public may wake up to this; so is by the theater-manager he thanked it any wonder the people for that the picthe interest they took in the picture. ture people are working Incidentally, overtime to he mentioned that he was born in Sacramento, began his career as an actor, BEATRICE ALLEN. WITH and went with the JOSEPH SANTLEY IN Vitagraph people as a ALL OVER TOWN" heavy man to play villains, but From a shotograph by Moffett, Chicago was quite content when they gave him

leading parts, as that meant more money. "Of the two kinds of work," he concluded, "spoken drama and that for the screen, I prefer the spoken, as it is far more inspiring to act before an audience rather than merely in front of a camera."

Then, after holding the stage for perhaps seven minutes, he said good night and bowed himself off, to go through the same performance at another theater farther down-town. And this sort of thing is becoming more and more common in New York. Is it the shadow casting itself before a coming trend away from the film make money of prosperity shines while the sun

so brightly down on them?

The prices charged by the makers of films work out something like this: Take a five-reel film, for example, which can be advertised as a special feature. For the use of this for one day, the man with a ten-cent theater must pay about fifteen dollars; the fifteen-cent house is taxed from thirty to fifty dollars, while the big theaters, which charge a top price of twentyfive cents, and for which the producers specially aim to cater, are made to pay

from fifty to seventy-five dollars for first chance at the same release.

The most discouraged of the legitimate managers in the face of the movie com-



GLADYS HULETTE, LEADING WOMAN WITH THE EDISON MOTION PICTURES

ing to an interview he gave the New York Herald during the summer, the theater people are hit not only in the drawing away of their audiences, but also by the big salaries the movie concerns offer to the Summing up, he declared that there were more "movie fans" than baseball fans in the United States, and that

theater-managers and producers must bestir themselves or ruin stared them in the

But to my way of thinking the time to have bestirred themselves was long ago, when they began to scrimp on what they gave the public for two dollars. In

this connection let me quote from a talk with a New York Times reporter by Josephine Cohan, sister of George, who, with her husband, Fred Niblo, recently returned from a threeyears' playing tour of Australia.

Speaking of theatrical customs in the

"Performances begin at eight o'clock, and are over shortly before eleven. When we first arrived, we had quite a time educating them to a lit-

tle later first curtain, for our plays were all short, and by beginning early we got out too early."

The italics are This is a mine. frank adpretty mission, isn't it? And it isn't the Cohan plays alone that are short measure. The tendency in this direction has been a steady one for the past ten years, during which period, o in many theaters, the orchestra has been cut out as well.

In the motionpicture houses one gets music throughout, no intervals, and except in very rare cases, a top price for seats of twenty - five cents.

You may go when you please, and, most important of all in a city of long distances, like New York, the business man need not drag down over the route he has already covered twice in going to and from his office. There are first-class picture-houses all over the up-town districts of Manhattan. In the regular theater district to-



GERALDINE FARRAR AS SHE POSED FOR MOTION PICTURES OF "CARMEN" WITH THE LASKY FEATURE PLAY COMPANY

day there linger comparatively few of the former residents, and these are largely people of the theatrical persuasion, who expect to get into the shows for nothing. Thus the so-called Broadway houses have come to depend almost wholly on the transient hotel trade for their patrons, and for their brief hiers in the "two-a-day." Time was when the variety managers consented to pay these inflated prices, on the idea that the public would gladly give seventy-five cents or a dollar to see well-known figures who could be seen for only two dollars otherwise.

BEATRICE NOVES, WHO FOLLOWED FLORENCE NASH AS POLLY IN "SINNERS"

From a thotograph by White, New York

these usually look for musical comedies and revues only.

A move in the right direction was made last autumn when John Cort built his Standard Theater at the corner of Broadway and Ninetieth Street, presenting downtown successes for a week's run, at a dollar for the best seats. The place was steadily packed, and now I hear he is to open two other houses, on the East Side this time, on a similar plan. I see no reason why a producing house should not be operated in some such manner in the uptown residential district. Possibly the success of the Washington Square Players may point the way to it.

The movies may prove a blessing in disguise to vaudeville, in the compulsory cutting down of the absurd salaries demanded by certain players from the legitimate

But the advent of the white screen has changed all this. Lured by huge prices-Billie Burke is said to have succumbed to an offer of forty thousand dollars for five weeks' work, while for a single picture, "The Gar-den of Lies," Jane Cowl got ten thousand from the Universal-so many of the big names can be seen in film-land for ten and fifteen cents, that their value to the vaudeville stage has been reduced practically to nil. Contracts have been canceled with some players who have stepped aside to pose for pictures, and in one case—that of Mrs. Leslie Carter—the weekly pay-check is said to have been reduced by a thousand dollars.

After all, this will work out to the advantage of the vaudeville patron, who will

ville patron, who will hereafter see in the varieties only those who land there through the intrinsic merit of what they have to offer, and not because they have won a reputation in some other line of work.

Dorothy Phillips, whose portrait is in the heading to the department this month, is one of the leading women with the Universal Film Company. She has had only a brief experience on the legitimate stage, although a very conspicuous one, having created the title-rôle in "Pilate's Daughter," that luckless offering with only women in the cast which was tried at the Century Theater last winter.

I had a chat with Violet Mersereau, a Universal star, whose picture also appears this month.

"No, I haven't always been in the movies," she said in answer to my question.

" I've been acting since I was nine-let me see, that is just nine years. Of course, I began as a child-with Margaret Anglin in 'The Eternal Feminine.' Later, when I was in 'The Clansman,' we carried two horses, and I used to get the man who had charge of them to let me ride them in the different towns we visited. In this way I came to be a fairly expert horsewoman. "In one place some one noticed my riding, and told my mother that the motion-picture people would probably be glad to get hold of me; but I had been in 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm,' following Edith Taliaferro, both in this country and London, and so didn't want to play anything but leads. When I went to apply for a job, I put my hair up and let my dress down, and might have got through in spite of my thirteen years, if the director hadn't noticed that my face looked very young. Then the secret came out, but I was taken on, although not as leading woman just yet. INA CLAIRE, IN HER IMITATION OF MRS. VERNON CASTLE, A FEATURE OF THE " ZIEGFELD FOLLIES" From her latest photograph—copyrighted by Ira L. Hill, New York "As a choice between pic-

JUSTINE JOHNSTON, WHO IS COLUMBIA WITH THE "ZIEGFELD FOLLIES"

From a shotogrash by White, New York

"As a choice between pictures and the spoken drama, I find it much pleasanter to play a dozen or fifteen parts during the year in the movies instead of doing the same thing over and over again on the regular







EDNA BATES, UNDERSTUDY FOR PRINCIPALS IN "WATCH YOUR STEP" AND "CHIN-CHIN" WHILE BOTH SHOWS WERE IN NEW YORK

From a thotograph by White, New York

stage, as you must do when in a success—and that, of course, is what we all want to be in. Besides, one gets work all the year around."

Although Anita Stewart has appeared prominently in only three pictures—in "A Million Bid," in "The Juggernaut," and as the heroine in the serial photoplay, "The Goddess"—and has never been on the professional stage, her face is perhaps familiar to as wide a circle as Maude Adams's. She is but nineteen years of age, and three years ago she was living quietly with her mother in Flatbush, a section of Brooklyn, with never a thought of fame. Nor did she seek it. It came to her in the shape of a suggestion from her brother-in-law, Ralph Ince, who is a director in the Vitagraph Company.

"Look here, Anita," he said to her one day, "I think those brown eyes of yours, to say nothing of the curls, are just the thing we want over at the studio. What do you say?"

She said yes; and although she may not get as high prices for her work as Geraldine Farrar, she has won in three years the publicity it took Miss Farrar twice as long to achieve. Miss Farrar, who was born in Melrose, Massachusetts, made her début at the Royal Opera House, Berlin, in 1901, and sang there for six seasons before reaching the New York Metropolitan. She has just received a fabulous sum for taking a trip to

a fabulous sum for taking a trip to Los Angeles and posing for the Lasky people in her most famous rôle, *Carmen*, which she is to sing again at the Metropolitan next winter.

Ina Claire is another, who, like Miss Stewart in the movies, "arrived" quickly on the legitimate stage. In January, 1912, just because she happened to dance well, the late H. B. Harris gave her the name-part in "The Quaker Girl." On the day after the first performance all playgoing New York was talking about this clever girl and wondering who she was and why it had never seen her before.

As a matter of fact, it had seen her —with Richard Carle, when she did some imitations in "Jumping Jupiter," and later with the unfortunate Folies Bergère company. She was born in

Washington, and last winter played the lead in "Lady Luxury," on view for a brief while at the Casino. Our portrait shows Miss Claire in her make-up for the imitation of Mrs. Castle which she does in the

1915 "Ziegfeld Follies."

In this revue she also gives a capital impersonation of Frances Starr in "Marie Odile," which play, by the by, fell down sadly and promptly in London at His Majesty's, where Marie Löhr played the title-rôle. The Prussian element that marked the New York Belasco production of the piece was eliminated, the locale being given as "a mountainous region." The English critics found the heroine's "staggering innocence" difficult of acceptance.

War plays, by the bye, have had little luck in London. Stephen Phillips's "Armageddon," on which Martin Harvey banked so strongly, was withdrawn in less than a fortnight, while "The Right to Kill" had only thirty-eight performances, and "The Day Before the Day" but nineteen. "The Man Who Stayed at Home"—known in New York as "The White Feather"—appears to be the only drama on a war theme to possess staying power. This has been the bill at the Royalty since

December 10.

Fred Jackson's farce, "A Full House," is to follow the long run of "Peg o' My Heart" at the London Globe. My prediction is an English hit. There's just enough of the irresponsible unconventionality which Britons like to associate with things American; but wo be unto the piece if they try to do it with an English cast!

Our portrait of Clare Weldon shows the portrayer of Mrs. Fleming, the woman who owns the apartment, in the New York cast of "A Full House," which is playing straight through the summer at the Longacre. Miss Weldon is a Philadelphia girl, who was educated abroad and studied music in Berlin with the idea of going on the grand opera stage. Reverses in fortune compelled her return to America, where she managed to secure a small part in "The Toast of the Town." lowed an engagement in stock, after which she made

her first hit, as the athletic girl in George Ade's famous comedy: "The College Widow."

After appearances in "Seven Days,"
"The Easiest Way," and "The Man Inside," she went back to Europe to resume her musical studies; but fate seemed determined to interfere with them. This time it took the shape of the European



From a thotograph by Underwood & Underwood, New York

Gladys Hulette, one of the many actresses who have gone into the movies, andwho is now with the Edison company, began, like Violet Mersereau, as a child. Her first big hit was as Tyltyl in "The Blue Bird," which opened the New Theater's second season. The Biograph company was the first to lure her into picture work, and she posed as the unhappy prince in

"Richard III." She has also written movies as well as acted in them—no small achievement.

Have you ever tried to write a picture play? At first blush it may seem easy, because there is no dialogue, but you will find that this very fact makes all the trouble after you once set to work. Really it is much more difficult than either fiction or playwriting. In the former there are no limitations, in the latter only those of place.

Of course, in picture devising, you have a pretty free hand as to places; but to make your audiences, if I may so call people who have for the nonce no use for their ears, understand all the twists and turns of your story without the characters being able to make themselves heard, calls for nothing less than genius. Hence so many poor movies.

The fiat has gone forth from the studios that it is bad form to use many "leaders" - the two or three lines of explanation that are now and then flashed on the screen; so the befogged condition of the spectators is often left to go from bad to worse. And how the directors love to have their characters smoke! I wonder if the actors pay for their own cigars. Smoke takes well, and anything that takes well is beloved of the average movie - director. What cares he whether the people out front know what it is all about? But if the average movie-director is an unintelligent

> in having the hapless members of the company subject to his every command, there is worse to come in the

tyrant, who delights only

CLARE WELDON, WHO IS MRS. FLEMING IN THE NEW YORK COMPANY OF FRED JACKSON'S
FARCE, "A FULL HOUSE"

From a shotograph by White, New York



ELEANOR PAINTER, STARRING IN "THE PRINCESS PAT," THE NEW MUSICAL PLAY BY VICTOR HERBERT AND HENRY BLOSSOM

From her latest thotograph by White, New York

shape of the cutter. This is the man who handles the pictures after they are taken, and prepares to fit them into their respective reel-lengths. Ordinarily, he proceeds very much after the fashion of Procrustes and his well-known bed. Hence the usual frantic rush to a climax at the end of stories, and the confused state of mind in the spectators as to how the dénouement came about.

Possibly we owe it to the prevalence of the motion picture, with its everlasting appeal to the eye alone, that within the past nine months an unusual number of theatrical enterprises have been launched in which special stress has been laid on an artistic blend of clever lines and effective, if simple, scenery. In New York alone we have had the Neighborhood Playhouse, where the Irish Theater in America took shape last spring, and the Washington Square Players, of whose clever work I gave an account last month. Comes now the Portmanteau Theater, designed by its director, Stuart Walker, to be packed for transportation in ten boxes, and incidentally exploiting a company of professionals which, on its male side especially, is made up of some capable players.

There are no footlights in the Portmanteau Theater. Granville Barker accustomed us to this last winter; but in place of the foots, Mr. Barker employed ugly illuminating spouts projecting from the gallery front. Mr. Walker, on the other hand, has a system all his own. Its source is invisible to the audience, but its results

are eminently satisfying.

The opening bill, submitted for the inspection of an audience invited to Christodora House, where the Portmanteau Theater was first set up in the gymnasium of a settlement, consisted of three one-act plays. All of these were peculiar, but all were well acted, and one at least-"Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil "-was capable of lingering long in memory. This and "The Trimplet" were both listed as anonymous, but I believe were written by Mr. Walker himself.

"What is a trimplet?" you ask. That is a query put by You, a character seated out front, to the Prologue, who, in the person of an actor, stands at one side of the proscenium opening.

"A trimplet," is his answer, "is the hole in a shadow made by a sunbeam.' If you are a millionaire, and want a dis-

tinctly different entertainment from a monkey supper or an amateur circus, order the Portmanteau Theater set up in your ballroom. It may cost more than the monkeys, but will be a good deal cheaper than the circus, and will certainly repay you in the new thoughts that it will put

into your head.

You will not get much to think about in "Hands Up," the "music-comico-filmomelo-drama," which after some twelve weeks of rehearsals and two false starts was finally launched in New York during the third week in July. This is a show of the sort in which the players appear to have a better time than the audience. Certainly Maurice and Florence Walton seem to enjoy themselves hugely in their first essay behind footlights, their work hitherto having been confined to ballroom floors. They are featured in "Hands Up"; so also is Ralph Herz, likewise Irene Franklin and her husband, Burton Green.

If five people are featured, wherein lies the glory of any being featured at all, you ask? The same query occurs to me, but without being featured on the program and in the electric sign, certain people won't

play.

The queer part of it is that a man in "Hands Up" who gets as much applause as anybody else, if not more, is not featured at all. This is Will Rogers, who throws the lariat and tells funny stories in his dry way. Donald MacDonald, too, does some really wonderful dancing without disorganizing the type-boxes to proclaim the fact that he is among those present.

Lew Fields was originally to appear in the piece, which is all about some missing jewelry. As I remarked a month or two ago, all that seems necessary to insure managerial acceptance for a manuscript nowadays is that it should have a pursuit after a stolen necklace or sunburst.

Possibly the managers are afraid of missing another "Grumpy." This play, which Cyril Maude is now acting in this country for its third season, was refused again and again for three years. Finally Mr. Maude trotted it out after two other offerings of his had failed to appeal to our tastes. The story, if you recall, deals with a stolen diamond and althought one critic called the piece a creaky comedy, the audiences " ate it up," as the saying runs, and the play bids fair to earn a fortune for Mr. Maude.

photograph by White,

through the summer were the two farces,

"It Pays to Advertise" and "A Full

House." Then there were "The Passing

Show of 1915" at the Winter Garden, and the "Ziegfeld Follies" at the New Amster-

dam, both of them to be counted upon as

Can you blame the managers, then, for going slow about passing up offerings with anything in them about missing jewels? Of last season's hits both "Under Cover" and "A Full House" were thus accountered, while "Three of Hearts," which is to be

seen again this autumn, revolved entirely about a stolen necklace.

Of course, all hits don't have purloined gems as their principal ingredients. There's "Twin Beds," for instance, the winner of the long-distance run of last year. We present a portrait of Irene Haisman, who replaced Madge Kennedy in the lead as the summer approached. Last season Miss Haisman, who is Scotch, was in "Kitty Mackay," and she has the distinction of having played around the world in another of Margaret Mayo's farces-" Baby Mine."

Laura Hamilton, also in our gallery of portraits, is in "Nobody Home," having replaced Alice Dovey, requisitioned for "Hands Up." Miss Hamilton is a Brooklyn girl, who made her début in the first of the Winter Garden shows, and last spring took part in "Fads and Fancies" at the Knickerbocker.

THE SUMMER RECORD

Shows that kept the boards in Manhattan

VIOLET MERSEREAU, A FAVORITE HEROINE WITH PATRONS OF THE UNIVERSAL MOVING PICTURES

annual hot-weather adjuncts to life on

Broadway.

"Sinners," at the Playhouse, after a run extending from December, closed on July 17, and "Twin Beds," with a record of fifty-one weeks, rang down on August 7. Why "The Bubble" kept afloat at the Booth I cannot imagine, but this brought the list of all-summer runs up to five. "The Birth of a Nation" has continued right along at the Liberty, but motion pictures are not in the reckoning just now.

Midway between seasons came the gratifying announcement that Augustus Thomas has been persuaded by Alf Hayman to take up the artistic end of the Charles Frohman enterprises. Born in St. Louis in 1859, Mr. Thomas was educated at the public schools, studied law for a time, worked on a railroad, and thence found his way into journalism, both on the writing and illustrating side, for he is no mean draftsman. It will be seen that through versatility alone he is eminently well equipped for so exacting a position as the one he has accepted.

His first play was the curtain-raiser, "Editha's Burglar," dramatized from Mrs. Burnett's story, and acted first by Robert Hilliard on July 1, 1889. His first successful full-length play was "Alabama," brought out two years later, after much trepidation, and then only to fill an unexpected gap, by A. M. Palmer. Among Mr. Thomas's other successes are "Arizona," "On the Quiet," "The Witching Hour," and "As a Man Thinks."

A man of wide culture, a finished afterdinner speaker, possessed of a keen sense of humor, and capable of adapting himself to any environment, I can think of no one more likely to reflect honor not only on his

more likely to reflect honor not only on his new post, but on American theater management in general, than Augustus Thomas.

### FARCE TO THE FORE

The first laugh of the new season, oddly enough, bore the title, "The Last Laugh." This was a farce by Paul Dickey and Charles W. Goddard, who have already collaborated successfully in "The Misleading Lady" and "The Ghost Breaker." While the idea of their latest offering opens the way to innumerable funny situations it cannot be said that the authors have utilized their material to the best possible effect. The piece bears a scraggly impress not noticeable in their previous work.

The name, of course, derives from the

well-known saying that "he who laughs last laughs best," and is a phrase frequently uttered in the first act by *Dr. Bruce*, who, without fear of saddling himself with another *Frankenstein*, has endeavored to create life out of electric and other strictly non-human appliances.

He has twice failed, and his friends fear that a third fiasco will unhinge his reason. Steps in the plot at this point in the person of Edward Abeles, introduced to the particular notice of New York as long ago as when "My Friend from India" made its unexpected hit, and hall-marked with fame as the original Monty Brewster of

" Brewster's Millions."

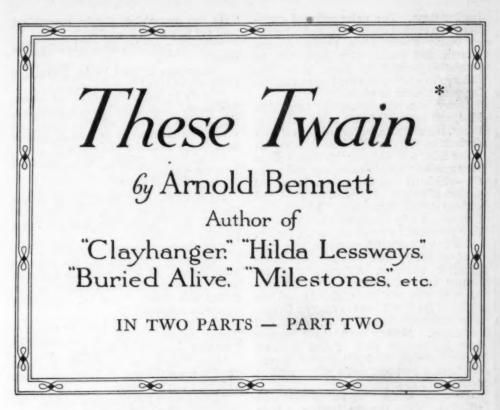
Abeles is hired for a thousand dollars by a doctor friend of *Bruce* to take the place of the made-to-order man, who will, his creator explains, although full-sized, be just like a baby so far as his brain equipment is concerned. When I add that the doctor's daughter is engaged to her father's assistant—who shares in the conspiracy—and that *Eugenia* insists on "nursing" the newcomer, you may imagine the character of the fun when it once gets going, which is not until the second of the three acts is well under way.

But there is a big surprise in store for the audience when a second bandagewrapped figure leaps out of the box where Dr. Bruce's lifeless creature has been bestowed. It wouldn't be fair to explain just how this happens. Indeed, the management should request first-night reviewers to keep the secret from their readers. One certainly gets a thrill from not knowing.

But the threads in the last act of "The Last Laugh" are very loosely drawn. I suspect that too many cooks had a hand in the stirring of the complications.

Abeles couldn't be bettered as Jim. He never overacts, and doesn't fish desperately for his laughs. He is a St. Louis boy, and in his youth was a page and protégé at Washington of the late Senator Cockerill. Like his fellow townsman, Augustus Thomas, he first took up law, and went so far in it as to be admitted to the bar. It was in Mr. Thomas's play, "Alabama," that he had his first part—Lanthrop Page.

"The Last Laugh" is the first in a perfect deluge of farces scheduled for the new season. The managers have sensed that with so many somber details of war served up to them every day in the papers, the people want to laugh in the evening.



### CHAPTER XIV

TAVY MANSION

ILDA and Harry Hesketh stood together in the soft, warm Devonshire sunshine, bending above the foothigh wire netting that separated the small ornamental pond from the lawn. By their side was a St. Bernard dog, with his great, baptizing tongue hanging out. Two swans, glittering in the strong light, swam slowly to and fro; one had a black foot tucked up on his back among downy white feathers; the other hissed at the dog, who

in his vast and shaggy good nature simply could not understand this malevolence on the part of a fellow creature.

Round about the elegant haughtiness of the swans clustered a number of iridescent Muscovy ducks, and a few white Aylesburys with gamboge beaks that intermittently quacked, all restless and expectant of blessings to fall over the wire netting that eternally separated them from the heavenly hunting-ground of the lawn.

Across the pond, looking into a moored dingey, an enormous drake with a vermilion topknot reposed on the balustrade of the

EDITORIAL NOTE.—"These Twain" is a novel complete in itself, and can be read and understood without knowledge of any other story. Nevertheless, as Arnold Bennett has already published two novels about the early careers of Edwin Clayhanger and Hilda Lessways, who are man and wife in "These Twain," it my be well to acquaint the reader briefly with the contents of these earlier works.

In the first of them, "Clayhanger," is told the history of Edwin Clayhanger from boyhood up to the age of about thirty-five. Edwin was the son of Darius Clayhanger, who rose from nothing to be a master printer in the English industrial district which Arnold Bennett calls the Five Towns. Darius had two other children, Maggie (older than Edwin), destined to spinsterhood, and Clara (younger than Edwin), who married an uxorious husband and had a large family. In the circle was also the terrible pietistic Aunty Hamps, sister of Edwin's dead mother.

Edwin's ambition was to be an architect, and this ambition was strengthened by his acquaint-

landing-steps. The water reflected everything in a rippled medley—blue sky, rounded woolly clouds, birds, shrubs, flowers, grasses, and browny-olive depths of the plantation beyond the pond, where tiny children in white were tumbling and shriek-

ing with a nurse in white.

Harry was extraordinarily hospitable, kind, and agreeable to his guest. Scarcely thirty, tall and slim, he carried himself with distinction. His flannels were spotless; his white shirt was spotless; his tennis shoes were spotless; but his blazer, cap, and necktie-which all had the same multicolored pattern of stripes-were shabby, soiled, and without shape. Nevertheless their dilapidation seemed only to adorn his dandyism, for they possessed a mysterious, sacred quality.

He had a beautiful mustache, nice eyes, hands excitingly dark with hair, and no affectations whatever. Although he had inherited Tavy Mansion and a fortune from an aunt who had left Oldcastle and the smoke of the Five Towns to marry a Devonshire landowner, he was boyish, modest, and ingenuous. Nobody could have guessed from his manner that he had children, nurses, servants, gardeners, grooms, horses, carriages, a rent-roll, and a safe margin at every year's end.

He spoke of the Five Towns with mild affection. Hilda thought, looking at him:

"He has everything, simply everything! And yet he's quite unspoiled!"

"How do you think Alicia's looking?" he

"Magnificent!" said Hilda, throwing a last piece of bread into the water.

"So do I; but she's ruined for tennis, you know. This baby business is spiffing, only it puts you right off your game. As a rule, she manages to be hors de combat bang in the middle of the season!"

"Well," said Hilda, "even you can't have everything."

"Why 'even 'me?"

He laughed. She merely gazed at him with a mysterious smile. She perceived that he was admiring her, and she felt a pleasing self-content.

" Edwin do much tennis nowadays?"

"Edwin?" She repeated the name in astonishment, as if it were the name of somebody who could not possibly be connected with tennis. "Not he! He's quite otherwise employed."

"I hear he's a fearful pot in the Five Towns anyway," said Harry seriously; " making money hand over fist."

Hilda raised her eyebrows, but the marked respectfulness of Harry's reference to Edwin was agreeable.

"I do believe I'm becoming a snob!" she thought.

ance with the Orgreave family, whose head, Osmond Orgreave, was the foremost architect in Bursley. Edwin tried hard to realize his ambition, but old Darius, who excusably thought that printing was the prince of trades, worsted him in the struggle.

Edwin accepted the defeat. His friendship with the numerous Orgreave family grew, and he found in their prosperous, gay, and generous home the refinement and artistic pleasures which were absent from his own. He also found, one evening, a mysterious and independent young creature, Hilda Lessways, with whom he fell in love. After an unexplained absence on her part, they were betrothed on the day when she had to leave Bursley for Brighton to watch over a sick friend. The next thing that Edwin heard was that Hilda was married to a man named George Cannon. The enigma was not explained.

Edwin was a second time defeated. But meanwhile his character, never precocious, was slowly developing, and he stood his ground in the world. Old Darius Clayhanger had died, but under Edwin the "prince of trades" continued to flourish, and Edwin became a figure in the world of the

Five Towns.

Then, after years, a little boy came from Brighton to stay with the Orgreaves. It was Hilda's son, and when Edwin learned that the child's name was George Edwin Cannon, he had a thrill. Later, he learned that Hilda was a widow. The most courageous and adventurous act of his life was to go to Brighton and rescue Hilda from the débris of an insolvent boarding-house of which she was the mistress. Then she confided to him that she was not really a widow, but that her husband was in prison. Edwin was desolated. In the result, the child's grave illness brought Hilda to Bursley, and at the bedside she confessed that the child's father was a bigamist, and that she herself was Mrs. Cannon only in name. They betrothed themselves again.

In the second novel, "Hilda Lessways," we have Hilda's side of the same story, and the explanation of the enigma unsolved in "Clayhanger." We see Hilda ambitious, impulsive, and overflowing with energy. She gets the post of secretary to George Cannon, an unqualified lawyer in her

native town, Turnhill, and a dabbler in newspaper proprietorship.

George Cannon's half-sister, Sarah Gailey, is an intimate of old Mrs. Lessways, Hilda's mother. Mrs. Lessways goes to London to stay with Sarah Gailey in Sarah's boarding-house, "It's hard work making money, even in our small way, in Bursley," she said, and seemed to indicate the expensive spaciousness of the gardens.

"I should like to see old Edwin again!"
"I never knew you were friends."

"Well, I used to see him pretty often at Lane End House after Alicia and I were engaged. In fact, once he jolly nearly beat me in a set."

" Edwin did?"

"You ought to have brought him. In fact I quite thought he was coming. I told Alicia to invite him, too, as soon as we knew you were bringing old Jan down."

"She did mention it; but he wouldn't hear of it. Works! Works! No holiday

all summer."

"Well," said Harry shortly and decisively, "we shall see what can be done. I may tell you we're rather great at getting people down here. I wonder where those

girls are!"

He turned round, and Hilda turned round. The red Georgian house, with its windows in octagonal panes, its large pediment hiding the center of the roof, and its white paint, showed brilliantly across the hoop-studded green, between some cypresses and an ilex. Everything was still, save the shiplike birds on the pond, the distant children in the plantation, and the small,

slow-moving clouds overhead. The sun's warmth was like an endearment.

Janet and Alicia, their arms round each other's shoulders, sauntered into view from behind the cypresses. On the more sheltered lawn nearest the house they were engaged in a quiet but tremendous palaver. Nobody but themselves knew what they were talking about. It might have been the affair of Johnnie and Mrs. Chris Hamson, as to which not a word had been publicly said at Tavy Mansion since Janet and Hilda's arrival.

Janet still wore black, and now she carried a red sunshade belonging to Alicia. Alicia was in white, not very clean white, and rather tousled. She was only twenty-five. She had grown big and jolly and downright and careless of herself. Her body had the curves, and her face the emaciation, of the young mother. She used abrupt, gawky, kind-hearted gestures.

For her children she had a passion. She would say openly, as it were defiantly, that she meant to be the mother of more chil-

dren-lots more.

"Hey, lass!" cried out Harry, using the broad Staffordshire accent for the amusement of Hilda.

The sisters stopped and untwined their arms.

"Hey, lad!" Alicia loudly responded;

and while Hilda is absorbed in the romance of secretaryship, Mrs. Lessways suddenly dies. George Cannon, through the jealousy of qualified lawyers, is forced to leave Turnhill, and he joins Sarah Gailey in the boarding-house business in Brighton. He has fascinated Hilda. When he proposes to her and she marries him, Hilda has already met and been impressed by Edwin, but the physical presence of George Cannon is stronger than the memory of Edwin.

Immediately on her return from the honeymoon, she learns, from the mouth of a furious servant, that George Cannon has a wife living, much older than himself, whom he married for money and abandoned. Confronted, he does not deny the charge. He leaves Hilda, but not before he has lost all her money. To support herself, Hilda helps Sarah Gailey to manage the boarding-house. It is soon after this that Hilda, through the Orgreaves, meets Edwin again; she understands the deep reality of her feeling for him, and the betrothal takes place, without any disclosure of her misadventure with George Cannon. But, returning to Brighton to succor Sarah Gailey, the fearful fact is revealed to her that she will be the mother of Cannon's child.

She does the one thing possible. She causes *Edwin* to be told that she is married, still concealing all the rest. She must pay for her impulsiveness and unwisdom, and she pays.

Even then the young woman's soul is unconquerable in hope. For, after terrible years, when Sarah Gailey is dead and Hilda is alone with her boy and her ruined life, Edwin Clayhanger magically and romantically supervenes, and she is saved.

How were this strangely assorted and yet well-assorted couple—the mild, quietly obstinate, stay-at-home man, and the daring, mettlesome, scarred woman who had affronted all experience—how were these two to get on in married life in the dulness of Bursley? The present book tells the story. In its early chapters, published in Munsey's Magazine for September, the interest centers upon Edwin's plans for enlarging his business, which Hilda opposes as too venturesome, but which he carries through to success. The slight discord between husband and wife is renewed by a mystery as to a telegram which Hilda sends, and by her unexplained request for money.

The second part of the novel opens with her visit to Alicia Orgreave, now Mrs. Harry Hesketh, married and living in a large country house in Devonshire. Not far away, on Dartmoor, is the prison in which George Cannon, the father of Hilda's son, is serving a term for forgery.

but instead of looking at her husband she was looking through him at the babies in

the plantation beyond the pond.

Janet smiled in her everlasting resignation. Hilda, smiling at her in return from the distance, recalled the tone in which Harry had said "old Jan"—a tone at once affectionate and half-contemptuous. She was old Jan now; destined to be a burden upon somebody and of very little use to anybody; no longer necessary.

"I'm going to telegraph to Edwin Clayhanger to come down for the week-end,"

shouted Harry.

And Alicia shouted in reply:

"Oh, spiffing!"

Hilda said nervously: "You aren't, really?"

She had no intention of agreeing to the pleasant project. A breach definitely existed between Edwin and herself, and the idea of either maintaining it or ending it on foreign ground was inconceivable. She had telegraphed a safe arrival, but she had not yet written.

Two gardeners, one pushing a wheeled water-can, appeared from an alley, and began silently and assiduously to water a shaded flower-bed. Alicia and Harry continued to shout enthusiastically to each other in a manner sufficiently disturbing, but the gardeners gave no sign that any-body except themselves lived in the garden.

Alicia, followed by Janet, was slowly advancing toward the croquet lawn, when a parlor-maid tripping from the house overtook her, and with modest deference murmured something to the bawling, jolly mistress. Still followed by Janet, Alicia turned and went into the house, while the parlor-maid, with bent head, waited discreetly to bring up the rear.

A sudden and terrific envy possessed Hilda, as she contrasted the circumstances of these people with her own. These people lived in lovely and cleanly surroundings, without a care beyond the apprehension of nursery ailments. They had joyous and kindly dispositions. They lived at peace with every one. Full of health, they ate

well and slept well.

They had absolutely no problems, and they did not seek problems. Nor had they any duties, save agreeable ones to each other. Their world was ideal. If you had asked them how their world could be improved, they would not have found an easy reply. They could only have demanded

less taxes and more fine days. Whereas Hilda and hers were forced to live among a brutal populace, amid the most horrible surroundings of smoke, dirt, and squalor. In Devonshire the Five Towns was unthinkable!

Edwin in the Bursley sense was a successful man and had consequence in the town, but the most that he had accomplished, or could accomplish, would not amount to the beginning of appreciable success according to higher standards. Nobody in Bursley really knew the mean-

ing of the word success.

And even such local success as Edwin had had—at what peril and with what worry was it won! These Heskeths were safe forever. Ah, she envied them, and she intensely depreciated everything that was hers. She stood in the Tavy Mansion garden like an impostor. Her husband was merely struggling upward.

Moreover, she had quarreled with him, darkly and obscurely; and who could guess what would be the end of marriage? Harry and Alicia never quarreled; they might have tiffs—nothing worse than that; they

had no grounds for quarreling.

And supposing Harry and Alicia guessed the link connecting her with Dartmoor

Prison!

"Evidently some one's called," said Harry, to account for his wife's disappearance. "I hope she's nice."

" Who?"

"Whoever's called. Shall we knock the balls about a bit?"

They began a mild game of croquet; but after a few minutes Hilda burst out sharply:

"You aren't playing your best, Mr. Hes-

keth. I wish you would!"

He was startled by her eyes and her tone.

"Honest Injun, I am," he fibbed in answer. "But I'll try to do better."

Then the parlor-maid and another maid came out to lay tea on two tables under the ilex.

"Bowley," said Harry over his shoulder, "bring me a telegraph-form next time you come out, will you?"

Hilda protested:

"No, Mr. Hesketh. Really! I assure

The telegraph-form came with the tea. "Who's called Rowley?"

"Who's called, Bowley?"
"Mrs. Rotherwas, sir."

Harry counted the cups. "Isn't she staying for tea?" " No, sir. I think not, sir."

Hilda, humming, walked about. At the same moment Alicia, Janet, and a tall young woman in black and yellow emerged from the house. Hilda moved behind a tree. She could hear good-byes.

An instant later Alicia arrived at the ilex, bounding and jolly; Janet moved more sedately. The St. Bernard, who had been reposing near the pond, now smelled tea and hot cakes and joined the party. The wagging of his powerful tail knocked over a wicker chair, and Alicia gave a squeal. Then Alicia, putting her hands to her mouth, shouted across the lawn:

"Nursey! Nursey! Take them in!"

And a faint reply came.

"What was the Rotherwas dame after?"

asked Harry, sharpening a pencil.

"She was after you, of course," said Alicia. "Tennis party on Monday. She wants you to balance young Truscott. I just told her so. We shall all go. You'll go, Hilda. She'll be delighted. I should have brought her along, only she was in such a hurry."

Hilda inquired:

"Who is Mrs. Rotherwas?"

"Her husband's a big coal-owner at Cardiff: but she's a niece or something of the governor of Dartmoor Prison, and she's helping to keep house for dear uncle just now. They'll take us over the prison before tennis. It's awfully interesting. Harry and I have been once."

"Oh!" murmured Hilda, staggered.

" Now about this 'ere woire," said Harry.

"What price this?"

He handed over the message which he had just composed. Hilda could not decipher it. She saw the characters with her eyes, but she was incapable of interpreting them. All the time she thought:

" I shall go to that prison. I can't help it. I sha'n't be able to keep from going. Who could have imagined this?

bound to go, and I shall go!"

But instead of objecting totally to the despatch of the telegram, she said in a strange voice:

" It's very nice of you."

"You fill up the rest of the form," said Harry, offering the pencil.

"What must I put?"

"Well, you'd better put, 'Countersigned, Hilda.' That 'll fix it.'

"Will you write it?" she muttered.

"Let poor mummy see!" Alicia complained, seizing the telegraph-form.

"Have that sent off for me, will you? Tell Jos to take it," said Harry, summoning a gardener.

"Why, Hilda, you aren't eating anything!" protested Alicia.

"I only want tea," said Hilda casually, wondering whether they had noticed anything wrong in her face.

Edwin, looking curiously out of the carriage-window as the train from Plymouth entered Tavistock station early on the Monday, was surprised to perceive Harry

Hesketh on the platform.

While the train was curving through Bickleigh Vale and the Valley of the Plym, and through the steeper valley of the Meavy up toward the first fastnesses of the moor, in the heavenly air of the September morning, he had felt his body to be almost miraculously well and his soul almost triumphant. But when he saw Harry—the remembered figure, but a little stouter and coarser-he saw a being easily more triumphant than himself.

Harry had great reason for triumph, for he had proved himself to possess a genius for deductive psychological reasoning and for prophecy. Edwin had been characteristically vague about the visit. First he had telegraphed that he could not come, business preventing. Then he had telegraphed that he would come, but only on Sunday, and he had given no particulars of trains. They had all assured one another that this was just like Edwin.

"The man's mad!" said Harry with genial benevolence, and had set himself to one of his favorite studies-Bradshaw.

He always handled Bradshaw like a master, accomplishing feats of interpretation that amazed his wife. He had announced that Edwin was perhaps, after all, not such a chump, but that he was in fact a chump, in that, having chosen the Bristol-Plymouth route, he had erred about the Sunday night train from Plymouth to Tavistock.

How did he know that Edwin would choose the Bristol-Plymouth route? Well. his knowledge was derived from divination, based upon vast experience of human na-Edwin would "get stuck" at ture. Plymouth. He would sleep at Plymouth -staying at the Royal, he hoped - and

would come on by the 8.01 A.M. on Monday, arriving at 8.59 A.M., where he would be met by Harry in the dog-cart drawn by Joan. And on the Monday Harry had risen up in the very apogee of health, and had driven Joan to the station.

"Mark my words!" he had said. "I shall bring him back for breakfast."

And there Edwin was! They shook hands in a glow of mutual pleasure. "How on earth did you know?" Edwin

hegan

The careful-casual answer rounded off Harry's triumph. And Edwin thought:

"Why, he's just like a grown-up boy!"
Outside the station the groom stood at
Joan's head, and a wonderful fox-terrier
sat alert under the dog-cart. Instantly
the dog sprang out and began to superintend the preparations for departure, rushing to and fro and insisting all the time
that delay would be monstrous, if not fatal.

"Balanced the cart, I suppose, Jos?"

asked Harry kindly.

"Yes, sir," was all that Jos articulated, but his bright face said: "Sir, your assumption that I have already balanced the cart for three and a bag is benevolent and justified. You trust me. I trust you, sir. All is well!"

Harry drove across the Tavy, and through the small gray-and-brown town, so picturesque, so clean, so solid, so respectable, so content in its historicity. A policeman saluted amiably and firmly, as if saving:

"I am protecting all this - what a

treasure!"

Then they passed the town hall.

"Town hall," said Harry.

" Oh!"

"The dook's," said Harry.

He put on a certain facetiousness, but there nevertheless escaped from him the conviction that the ownership of a town hall by a duke was a wondrous rare phenomenon and fine, showing the strength of grand English institutions and traditions, and meet for honest English pride. You could say what you liked about progress! And Edwin had just the same feeling.

In another minute they were out of the town. The countryside, though bleak, with its spare hedges and granite walls, was exquisitely beautiful in the morning light; and it was tidy, tended, mature; it was as if it had nothing to learn from the future. Beyond rose the moor, tonic and grim.

An impression of health, moral and physical, everywhere disengaged itself. The trot of the horse on the smooth, winding road, the bounding of the dog, the resilience of the cart-springs, the sharp tang of the air on the cheek, all helped to perfect Edwin's sense of pleasure in being alive.

He could not deny that he had stood in need of a change. He had been worrying. He now saw that there was no reason why he should not be happy always, even with Hilda. He had received a short but nice and almost apologetic letter from Hilda. As for his apprehensions, what on earth did it matter about Dartmoor being so near? Nothing! This district was marvelously reassuring.

"Had your breakfast?" asked Harry.

"Yes, thanks."

"Well, you just haven't, then!" said Harry. "We shall be in the nick of time for it."

"When do you have breakfast?"

"Nine thirty."

" Bit late, isn't it?"

"Oh, no! It suits us. I say!"

"What?"

"No news about Johnnie, I suppose?"
"Not that I've heard. Bit stiff, isn't it?" Edwin answered.

"I should rather say it was. Especially after Jimmie's performance. Rather hard

lines on Alicia, don't you think?"

"On all of 'em," said Edwin, not seeing why Johnnie's escapade should press more on Alicia than, for example, on Janet.

Harry resumed his jolly tone:

"Well, we've planned a hard day for you."

" Oh!"

"Yes—early lunch, and then we're going to drive over to Princetown. Tennis with the governor of the prison. He'll show us over the prison. It's worth seeing."

Impulsively Edwin exclaimed: "All of you? Is Hilda going?"

"Certainly. Why not?" He raised the whip and pointed: "Behold our noble towers. There's Alcia and the babes."

Edwin, feeling really sick, thought: "Hilda's mad. She's quite mad. Mor-

bid isn't the word!"

At Tavy Mansion Edwin and Harry were told by a maid that Mrs. Hesketh and Miss Orgreave were in the nursery and would be down in a moment, and that Mrs. Clayhanger had a headache and was re-

maining in bed for breakfast. The master of the house took Edwin to the door of his wife's bedroom.

Edwin's spirits had risen in an instant, as he perceived the cleverness of Hilda's headache. By the simple device of suffering from a headache Hilda had avoided the ordeal of meeting a somewhat estranged husband in public; she was also preparing an excuse for not going to Dartmoor.

As he opened the bedroom door, apprehensions and bright hope were mingled in him. He had a weighty grievance against Hilda, whose behavior at parting had been, he considered, inexcusable; but the warm tone of her curt private telegram to him and of her almost equally curt letter was equivalent to an apology, which he accepted with eagerness.

Moreover, he had done a lot in coming to Devonshire. For this great act he lauded himself, and expected some gratitude. Nevertheless, despite the pacificism of his feelings he could not smile when entering the room. No, he could not!

Hilda was lying in the middle of a very wide bed, and her dark hair was spread abroad upon the pillow. On the pedestal was a tea-tray. Squatted comfortably at Hilda's side, with her left arm as a support, was a baby about a year old, dressed for the day. This was Cecil, born the day after his grandparents' funeral.

Cecil, with mouth open and outstretched pink hands, of which the fingers were spread like the rays of half a starfish, gazed at Edwin with a peculiar expression of bland irony. Hilda smiled lovingly; she smiled without reserve. And as soon as she smiled, Edwin could smile, and his heart was suddenly quite light.

Hilda thought:

"That wistful look in his eyes has never changed, and it never will. Imagine him traveling on Sunday, when the silly old thing might just as well have come on Saturday, if he'd had anybody to decide him! What a shame of me to have dragged him down here in spite of himself! But he would do it for me! He has done it. I had to have him, for this afternoon! And now, of course, he's going to be annoyed again. Poor boy!"

"Hello! Who's this?" cried Edwin.
"This is Cecil. His mummy's left him here with his Aunty Hilda," said Hilda.

"Another clever dodge of hers!" thought Edwin, who liked the baby being there. "Well, my poor boy! What a journey!" Hilda murmured compassionately.

He was standing over her, by the bedside. She looked straight up at him, timid and expectant. He bent and kissed her. Under his kiss she shifted slightly in the bed, and her arms clung round his neck. She shut her eyes. She would not loose him. She seemed again to be drawing the life out of him.

At last she let him go, and gave a great sigh. All the past which did not agree with that kiss and that sigh of content was annihilated, and an immense reassurance filled Edwin's mind.

"So you've got a headache?"

She gave a succession of little nods, smiling happily.

"I'm so glad you've come, dearest," she said, after a pause. She was just like a young girl, like a child, in her relieved satisfaction, "What about George?"

"Well, as it was left to me to decide, I thought I'd better ask Maggie to come and stay in the house. Much better than packing him off to Aunty Hamps's."

"Then you did get my letter in time?"
"I shouldn't have got it in time if I'd left Saturday morning, as you wanted. Oh! And here's a letter for you."

He pulled a letter from his pocket. The envelope was of the peculiar tinted paper with which he was already familiar.

Hilda became self-conscious as she took the letter and opened it. Edwin, too, was self-conscious. To lighten the situation, he put his little finger in the baby's mouth. Cecil much appreciated this form of humor, and as soon as the finger was withdrawn from his toothless gums, he made a bubbling, whirring noise, and waved his arms to indicate that the game must continue.

Hilda, frowning, read the letter. Edwin sat down, ledging himself cautiously on the brink of the bed. From the distance, beyond walls, he could hear the powerful, happy cries of older babies, beings fully aware of themselves, who knew their own sentiments and could express them. He glanced round the long, low room with its small open windows showing sunlit yellow corn-fields and high trees, and its monumental furniture, and the disorder of Hilda's belongings humanizing it and making it her abode.

He glanced prudently at Hilda over the letter-paper. She had no headache. It was obvious that she had no headache; yet in the most innocent, touching way she had nodded an affirmative to his question about it.

It was with this mentality, he reflectedassuming that his own mentality never loved anything as well as the truth—that he had to live till one of them expired. He reminded himself wisely that the woman's code is different from the man's; but the honesty of his intelligence rejected such an explanation, such an excuse. It was not that the woman had a different code; she had no code except the code of the utter opportunist.

To live with her was like living with a marvelous wild animal, full of grace, of cunning, of magnificent passionate gestures, of terrific affection, and of cruelty. She was at once indispensable and intolerable. He felt that to match her he had need of all his force, all his prescience, all his du-The mystery that had lain between him and Hilda for a year was in the letter within two feet of his nose.

"Did you bring your dress clothes?" she murmured, while she was reading. She had instructed him in her letter on this

"Of course," he said, manfully striving to imply the immense truth that he never stirred from home without his dress clothes.

She continued to read, frowning, and drawing her heavy eyebrows still closer together. Then she said:

" Here!"

She passed him the letter. He could see now that she was becoming excited.

The letter was from the legitimate Mrs. George Cannon, and it said that, though nothing official was announced or even breathed, her solicitor had gathered from a permanent and important underling at the Home Office that George Cannon's innocence was supposed to be established, and that the queen's pardon would, at some time or other, be issued.

It was an affecting letter. Edwin, totally ignorant of all that had preceded it, did not immediately understand its significance.

"What is it? What is it?" he gues-

tioned, as if impatient.

"It's about George Cannon," Hilda replied. "It seems he was quite innocent in that bank-note affair. It's his wife who's been writing to me about it. I don't know why she should; but she did, and of course I had to reply."

"You never told me about it."

"I didn't want to worry you, dearest. J knew you had quite enough on your mind with the works. Besides, I had no right to worry you with a thing like that. But, of course, I can show you all her letters. I've kept them."

Unanswerable! Unanswerable! Insincere, concocted, but unanswerable! The implications in her spoken defense were of the simplest and deepest ingenuity, and withal they hurt him. For example, the implication that the strain of the new works was breaking him! As if he could not support it easily! As if the new works meant that he could not fulfil all his duties as a helpmeet!

And then the devilishly adroit plea that her concealment was morally necessary, since he ought not to be troubled with any result of her preconjugal life! And finally the implication that he would be jealous of the correspondence and might exact a production of it! He now callously ignored Cecil's signals for attention.

"Isn't it awful?" Hilda muttered. "Him

in prison all this time!"

He saw that her eyes were wet, and her emotion increasing. He nodded in sym-

"She'll want some handling-I can see

that!" he thought.

He, too, as well as she, imaginatively comprehended the dreadful tragedy of George Cannon's wrongful imprisonment. He had heart enough to be very glad that the innocent man-innocent, at any rate, of the one thing-was to be released; but at the same time he could not stifle a base foreboding and regret. Looking at his wife, he feared the moment when George Cannon, with all the enormous prestige of a victim in a woman's eyes, would be at large. Yes, the lover in him would have preferred George Cannon to be incarcerated forever.

"I suppose that he is innocent?" he said gruffly, for he mistrusted, or affected to mistrust, the doings of these two women together-Cannon's wife and Cannon's vic-Might they not somehow have been hoodwinked? He knew nothing, no useful detail, naught that was convincing—and he

never would know! "He must be innocent," Hilda answered

thoughtfully, in a breaking voice. "Where is he now-up yon?"

He indicated the unvisited heights of Dartmoor.

" I believe so."

"I thought they always shifted them back to London before they released 'em."

"I expect they will do. They may have

done so already."

His mood grew soft, indulgent. He conceded that her emotion was natural. She had been bound up with the man. Cannon's admitted guilt on the one count, together with all that she had suffered through it, only intensified the poignancy of his innocence on the other count.

Edwin's own rôle would be difficult, but all his pride and self-reliance commanded him to play it well. The future would be all right, because he would be equal to the emergency. His heart in kindliness and tenderness drew nearer to Hilda's, and he saw, or fancied he saw, that all their guerrilla had been leading up to this, had perhaps been caused by this, and would be nobly ended by it.

Just then a mysterious noise penetrated the room, growing and growing until it became a huge, deafening din, and slowly

died away.

"I expect that's breakfast," said Edwin

in a casual tone.

He rose from the bed. As he did so, Hilda retained him with her left hand, and pulled him very gently toward her, inviting a kiss. He kissed her. She held to him. He could see at a distance of two inches all the dark, swimming color of her wet eyes, half veiled by the long lashes. And he could feel the soft limbs of the snuffling baby somewhere close to his head.

"You'd better stick where you are," he

advised her in a casual tone.

Hilda thought:

"Now the time's come. He'll be furious; but I can't help it."

"Oh, no! I shall be quite all right soon. I'm going to get up in about half an hour."

"But then how can you get out of go-

ing to Princetown?"

"Oh, Edwin, I must go! I told them I would go."

His resentment was violent. He stood right away from her.

"Told them you would go!" he exclaimed. "What in the name of Heaven does that matter? Are you mad?"

Her features hardened. In the midst of her terrible relief as to the fate of George Cannon, and of her equally terrible excitement under the enigmatic and irrestible mesmerism of Dartmoor Prison, she was desperate, and resentment against Edwin kindled deep within her. She felt that he would never really understand. She felt all her weakness, and all his strength, but she was determined.

"I must go," she repeated.

"It's nothing but morbidness!" he said savagely. "Morbidness! I sha'n't let you go—and that's flat!"

She kept silent. Frightfully disturbed, cursing women, forgetting utterly in a moment his sublime resolves, Edwin descended to breakfast in the large, strange house.

Before the middle of the morning Hilda came into the garden, where every one else was idling. She said her headache had vanished.

"Sure you feel equal to going this afternoon, dearest?" asked Janet.

"Oh, yes!" Hilda replied lightly. "It will do me good."

Edwin was helpless. He thought, recalling with vexation his last firm, forbidding words to Hilda in the bedroom:

"Nobody could be equal to this emer-

gency!"

# CHAPTER XV

#### THE PRISON

HARRY had two stout and fast cobs in a light wagonette. He drove himself, and Hilda sat by his side. The driver's boast was that he would accomplish the ten miles, with a rise of a thousand feet, in an hour and a quarter.

It was when they had cleared the town and were on the long, straight rise across the moor toward Longford, that the horses began to prove the faith that was in them—eager, magnanimous, conceiving grandly the splendor of their task in life, and irrepressibly performing it with glory. From under the striding of their hoofs the stones on the loose-surfaced road flew into the soft, dark ling on either hand.

Harry's whip hovered in affection over their twin backs, never touching them, and Harry smiled mysteriously to himself. He did not wish to talk. Nor did Hilda. The movement braced and intoxicated her, and rendered thought impossible. She brimmed with emotion, like a vase with some liquid unanalyzable and perilous. She would have prolonged the journey indefinitely, and yet she intensely desired the goal, whatever terrors it might hold for her.

"Longford!" ejaculated Harry, turning his head slightly toward the body of the vehicle as they rattled by a hamlet.

Soon afterward the road mounted steeply—five hundred feet in little more than a mile — and the horses walked; but they walked in haste, fiercely, clawing at the road with their forefeet and thrusting it behind them. Some of the large tors emerged clearly into view—Cox Tor, the Staple Tors, and Great Mis lifting its granite above them and beyond.

They were now in the midst of the moor, trotting fast again. Behind and before them, and on either side, there was nothing but moor and sky. The sky, a vast hemisphere of cloud and blue and sunshine, with a complex geography of its own, discovered all the tints of heath and granite.

Nothing could be seen over the whole moor save here and there a long-tailed pony, or a tiny cottage set apart in solitude. The yellowish road stretched forward, wavily narrowing—disappeared for a space, reappeared still narrower, disappeared once more, reappeared like a thin, meandering line, and was lost on the final verge. It was an endless road.

Harry checked the horses at a descent. "Walkham River!" he announced.

They crossed a pebbly stream by a granite bridge.

"Hut-circles!" said Harry laconically.

They were climbing again.

Edwin, in the body of the wagonette with Janet and Alicia, looked for hut-circles and saw none; but he did not care. He had never seen wild England before, and its primeval sanity awoke in him the primeval man. The healthiness and simplicity and grandiose beauty of it created the sublime illusion that civilization was worthy to be abandoned. The Five Towns seemed intolerable by their dirt and ugliness, and by the tedious intricacy of their existence. Lithography—you had but to think of the word to perceive the paltriness of the thing! Riches, properties, proprieties, all the safeties—futile!

He could have lived alone with Hilda on the moor, watching her with her brood, all their faces beaten by wind and rain and browned with sun. He had a tremendous, a painful longing for such a life. His imagination played round the idea of it with voluptuous and pure pleasure, and he wondered that he had never thought of it before. His mood became gravely elated, even optimistic. He saw that he had worried himself about nothing. If she wanted to visit the prison, let her visit it. Why not?

At any rate, he would not visit it. He had an aversion for morbidity almost as strong as his aversion for sentimentality; but her morbidity could do no harm. She could not possibly meet George Cannon. The chances were utterly against such an encounter.

Her morbidity would cure itself. He pitied her, cherished her, and in thought enveloped her fondly with his sympathetic and protective wisdom.

"North Hessary!" said Harry, pointing with his whip to a jutting tor on the right hand. "We go round by the foot of it.

There in a jiff!"

Soon afterward they swerved away from the main road, obeying a sign-post marked "Princetown."

"Glorious, isn't it?" murmured Janet, after a long silence which had succeeded the light chatter of herself and Alicia about children, servants, tennis, laundries.

He nodded, with a lively, responsive smile, and glanced at Hilda's back.

A town, more granite than the moor itself, gradually revealed its roofs in the heart of the moor. The horses, indefatigable, quickened their speed. Villas, a school, a chapel, a heavy church-tower, followed in succession; there were pavements; a brake full of excursionists had halted in front of a hotel; holiday-makers—simple folk who disliked to live in flocks—wandered in ecstatic idleness.

Concealed within the warmth of the mountain air there pricked a certain sharpness. All about, beyond the little town, the tors raised their shaggy flanks, surmounted by colossal masses of stone that recalled the youth of the planet. The feel of the world was stimulating, like a tremendous tonic.

Then the wagonette passed a thick grove of trees, hiding a house, and in a moment, like magic, appeared a huge gated archway of brick and granite, and over it the incised words:

#### PARCERE SUBJECTIS

"Stop! Stop, Harry!" cried Alicia shrilly. "What are you doing? You'll have to go to the house first."

"Shall I?" said Harry. "All right. Two

thirty-five, be it noted."

The vehicle came to a standstill.

"Vergil!" thought Edwin, gazing at the gateway, which filled him with sudden horror, like an obscenity misplaced.

Less than ten minutes later, he and Hilda and Alicia, together with three strange men,

stood under the archway.

Events had followed one another quickly, to Edwin's undoing. When the wagonette drew up in the grounds of the governor's house, Harry Hesketh had politely indicated that for his horses he preferred the stables of a certain inn down the road to any stables that hospitality might offer; and he had driven off, Mrs. Rotherwas urging him to return without delay, so that tennis might begin.

The governor had been called from home, and in his absence a high official of the prison was deputed to show the visitors through the establishment. This official was the first of the three strange men; the

other two were visitors.

Janet had said that she would not go over the prison, because she meant to play tennis, and wished not to tire herself. Alicia said kindly that she at any rate would go with Hilda; though she had seen it all before, it was interesting enough to see again.

Edwin had thereupon said that he would remain with Janet. But immediately Mrs. Rotherwas, whose reception of him had been full of the most friendly charm, had shown surprise, if not pain. What, come to Princetown without inspecting the wonderful prison, when the chance was there? Inconceivable!

Edwin might in his blunt, Five Towns way have withstood Mrs. Rotherwas, but he could not withstand Hilda, who frowning, seemed almost ready to risk a public altercation in order to secure his attendance. He had to yield. To make a scene, even a very little one, in the garden full of light dresses and polite, suave voices would

have been monstrous.

He thought of all he had ever heard of the subjection of men to women. He thought of men as a sex conquered by the unscrupulous and the implacable; and in this mood, superimposed on his mood of disgust at the mere sight of the archway, he followed the high official and his train.

A turnkey on the other side of the immense gates, using a theatrical gesture, jangled a great bouquet of keys; the portal opened, and the next moment they were interned in the outer courtyard. The moor and all that it meant lay unattainably be-

yond that portal.

As the group slowly crossed the enclosed space, with the grim façades of yellowbrown buildings on each side, and vistas of further gates and buildings in front, the official and the two male visitors began to talk together over the heads of Alicia and Hilda. The women held close to each other, and the official kept upon them a chivalrous eye; the two visitors were friends; Edwin was left out of the social scheme, and lagged somewhat behind, like one who is not wanted but who cannot be abandoned.

In one instant the three men had estimated him, and had decided that he was not of their clan nor of any related clan; whereas the official and the two male visitors, who had never met before, grew more and more friendly each minute. One said that he did not know So-and-So of the Manchesters, but he knew his cousin Trevor of the Hussars, who had in fact married a niece of his own. And then another question about somebody else was asked, and immediately they were engaged in following clues, as explorers will follow the intricate mouth of a great delta and so unite in the main stream. They were happy.

Edwin did not seriously mind that; but what he did mind was their accent, in those days termed throughout the midlands " lahdi-dah" - an onomatopœic descriptionwhich, falsifying every vowel-sound in the language, and several consonants, magically created around them an aura of utter superiority to the rest of the world. Quite unreasonably, he hated them, and he also envied them, because this accent was their native tongue, and because their clothes were not cut like his, and because they were entirely at their ease. Also Edwin despised them because they were seemingly insensible to the tremendous horror of the jail set there like an outrage in the midst of primitive and sane Dartmoor.

"Yes," their attitude said, "this is a prison, one of the institutions necessary to the well-being of society, like a workhouse or an opera-house-an interesting sight!"

A second pair of iron gates was opened with the same elaborate theatricality as the first, and while the operation was being done the official, invigorated by the fawning turnkeys, conversed with Alicia. after another open space, came a third pair of iron gates, final and terrific, and at length the party was under cover, and even

the sky of the moor was lost. Edwin, bored, disgusted, shamed, and stricken, yielded himself proudly and submissively to the horror of the experience.

Hilda had only one thought—would she catch sight of the innocent prisoner?

The party was now deeply engaged in a system of corridors and stairways. The official had said that as the tour of inspection was to be short, he would display to them chiefly the modern part of the prison. So far not a prisoner had been seen, and scarcely a warder.

The two male visitors were scientifically interested in the question of escapes. Did

prisoners ever escape?

"Never!" said the official with satisfac-

tion.

"Impossible, I suppose, even when they're working out on the moor? Warders

are pretty good shots, eh?"

"Practically impossible," said the official. "But there is one way." He looked up the stairway on whose landing they stood, and down the stairway, and cautiously lowered his voice. "Of course, what I tell you is confidential. If one of our Dartmoor fogs came on suddenly, and kind friends outside had hidden a stock of clothes and food in an arranged spot, then theoretically—I say theoretically—a man might get away. But nobody ever has done so."

"I suppose you still have the silent

system?"

The official nodded.

" Absolutely?"

" Absolutely."

"How awful it must be!" said Alicia, with a nervous laugh.

The official shrugged his shoulders, and the other two males murmured reassuring

axioms about discipline.

They emerged from the stairway into a colossal and resounding iron hall. Round the emptiness of this interior ran galleries of perforated iron, protected from the abyss by iron balustrades. The group stood on the second of the galleries from the stone floor, and there were two more galleries above them.

Far away, opposite, a glint of sunshine had feloniously slipped in, transpiercing the gloom, and if lighted a series of doors. There was a row of these doors along every gallery. Each had a peep-hole, a keyhole, and a number. The longer Hilda regarded, the more nightmarishly numerous seemed the doors. Across the whole width and length of the hall, at the level of the lowest gallery, was stretched a great net.

"To provide against suicides?" suggest-

ed one of the men.

"Yes," said the official.

"A good idea!"

When the reverberation of the words had ceased, a little silence ensued. The ear listened vainly for the silghtest sound. In the silence the implacability of granite walls and iron reticulations reigned over the accursed vision, stultifying the soul.

"Are these cells occupied?" asked Alicia

timidly.

"Not yet, Mrs. Hesketh. It's too soon. A few are."

Hilda thought:

"He may be here, behind one of those doors." Her heart was liquid with compassion and revolt. "No," she assured herself. "They must have taken him away already. It's impossible he should be here. He's innocent!"

"Perhaps you would like to see one of

the cells?" the official suggested.

A warder appeared, and, with the inescapable jangle of keys, opened a door. The party entered the cell; ladies first, then the official and his new acquaintances, then Ed-

win, trailing.

The cell was long and narrow, fairly lofty, bluish-white in color, very dimly lighted by a tiny, grimed window high up in a wall of extreme thickness. The bed lay next the wall; except the bed, a stool, a shelf, and some utensils, there was nothing to furnish the horrible nakedness of the wall.

One of the visitors picked up an old book from the shelf. It was a Greek Testament. The party seemed astonished at this evidence of culture of prisoners, of the height from which a criminal may have fallen.

The official smiled.

"They often ask for such things on purpose," said he. "They think it's effective. They're very naive, you know, at bottom."

"This very cell may be his cell," thought Hilda. "He may have been here all these months, years, knowing that he was innocent. He may have thought about me in this cell."

She glanced cautiously at Edwin, but Edwin would not catch her eye.

They left. On the way to the workshops, they had a glimpse of the old parts of the prison, used during the Napoleonic wars—incredibly dark, frowzy, like catacombs.

"We don't use this part, unless we're very full up," said the official; and he contrasted it with the bright, spacious, healthy excellences of the hall which they had just quitted, to prove that civilization never stood still.

Then, suddenly, at the end of a passage, a door opened, and they were in the tailor's shop—a large, irregular apartment full of a strong stench and of squatted and grotesque human beings. The human beings, for the most part, were clothed in a peculiar brown stuff, covered with broad arrows. Their dress consisted of a short jacket, baggy knickerbockers, black stockings, and colored shoes. Their hair was cut so short that they had the appearance of being bald, and their great ears protruded at a startling angle from the sides of those smooth heads.

They were of every age, yet they all looked alike — ridiculous, pantomimic, appalling. Some gazed with indifference at the visitors; others seemed oblivious of the entry. They all stitched, on their haunches, in the stench, under the surveillance of eight armed warders in blue.

"How many?" asked the official mechanically.

"Forty-nine, sir," said a warder.

Hilda searched their loathsome and vapid faces for the face of George Cannon. He was not there. She trembled — whether with relief or with disappointment she knew not.

No comment had been made in the workshop, the official having hinted that silence was usual on such occasions; but in a kind of antechamber the party halted in the midst of a discussion as to discipline. The official, triumphant, stated that every prisoner had the right of personal appeal to the governor every day.

"They come with their stories of grievances," said he, tolerant and derisive.

"Which often aren't true?"

"Which are never true," said the official quietly.

"Really!" said one of the men, rather pleased and excited by this report of universal lying.

"I suppose," Edwin blurted out, "you can tell for certain when they aren't speaking the truth?"

Everybody looked at him surprised, as if the dumb had spoken. The official's

glance showed some suspicion of sarcasm and a tendency to resent it.

"We can," he answered shortly, commanding his features to a faint smile. "And now I wonder what Mrs. Rotherwas will be saying if I don't restore you to her!"

They entered a wide corridor leading in the direction of the chief entrance. From the end of this corridor a file of convicts was approaching, in charge of two warders with guns. The official offered no remark, but held on.

Hilda, falling back near to Edwin in the procession, was divided between a dreadful fear and a hope equally dreadful. Except in the tailor's shop, these were the only prisoners they had seen, and they appeared out of place in the half freedom of the corridor; for nobody could conceive a prisoner save in a cell, and these were moving in a public corridor, unshackled.

Then she distinguished George Cannon among them. He was the third from the last. She knew him by his nose and the shape of his chin, and by his walk, though there was little left of his proud step in the desolating, hopeless prison - shuffle which was the gait of all six convicts. His hair was iron-gray. All these details she could see and be sure of in the distance of the dim corridor.

She cried out to herself:

"Why did I come? Why did I come?"
The party of visitors led by the high official, and the file of convicts in charge of armed warders, were gradually approaching one another in the wide corridor. It seemed to Hilda that a fearful collision was imminent; but nobody among the visitors did anything or seemed to be disturbed. Only they had all fallen silent; and in the echoing corridor could be heard the firm steps of the male visitors accompanying the delicate tripping of the women, and the military tramp of the warders with the confused shuffling of the convicts.

"Has he recognized me?" thought Hilda,

wildly.

She hoped that he had and that he had not. She recalled with the most poignant sorrow the few days of their union, their hours of intimacy, their kisses, her secret realization of her power over him, and of his passion. She wanted to scream:

"That man there is as innocent as any of you, and soon the whole world will know it. He never committed any crime except that of loving me too much. It is

horrible that he should be here in this hell! How can any one bear that he should stay here one instant longer?"

But she made no sound. The tremendous force of an ancient and organized society kept her lips closed and her feet in a line with the others. She thought in despair:

"We are getting nearer, and I cannot

meet him. I shall drop!"

She glanced at Edwin, as if for help, but Edwin was looking straight ahead.

Then a warder, stopping, ejaculated with the harsh brevity of the drill-sergeant: "Halt!"

The file halted.
"Right turn!"

The six captives turned, with their faces close against the wall of the corridor, obedient, humiliated, spiritless, limp, stooping. Their backs presented the most ridiculous aspect. All the calculated grotesquery of the surpassingly ugly prison uniform was accentuated as they stood thus, a row of living scarecrows, who knew that they had not the right even to look upon free men. Every one of them, except George Cannon, had large, protuberant ears that completed the monstrosity of his appearance.

The official gave his new acquaintances

a satisfied glance, as if saying:

"That is the rule by which we manage

these chance encounters."

The visitors went by in silence, instinctively edging away from the captives. As she passed, Hilda lurched very heavily against Edwin, and recovered herself.

Behind them they could hear the warder:

"Left turn! March!"

And the shuffling and the tramping recommenced.

In the garden of the governor's house tennis had already begun when the official brought back his convoy. Young Truscott and Mrs. Rotherwas were pitted against Harry Hesketh and a girl of eighteen who possessed a good wrist, but could not keep her head. Harry was fully engaged; the whole of his brain and body were at strain; he let nothing go by; he missed no chance, and within the laws of the game he hesitated at no stratagem.

To the entering party, the withdrawn scene, lit by sunshine, appeared as perfect as a stage-show, with its trees, lawn, flowers, toilets, the flying balls, the grace of the players, and the gray solidity of the governor's house in the background.

Alicia ran gawkily to Janet, who had got a box of chocolates from somewhere, and one of the men followed her, laughing. Hilda sat apart; she was less pale. Edwin remained cautiously near her. He had not left her side since she lurched against him in the corridor. He knew; he had divined that that which he most feared had come to pass—the supreme punishment of Hilda's morbidity.

He had ignored his own emotion. The sudden, transient weight of Hilda's body had had a strange moral effect upon him.

"This," he thought, "is the burden I have to bear. This, and not lithography, nor riches, is my chief concern. She depends on me. I am all she has to stand by!" The burden, with its immense and complex responsibilities, was sweet to his inmost being. It braced him, and destroyed his resentment against her morbidity. His pity was pure. He felt that he must live more nobly—yes, more heroically—than he had been living; that all irritable pettiness must drop away from him, and that his existence in her regard must have simplicity and grandeur.

The sensation of her actual weight stayed with him. He had not spoken to her; he dared not. He had scarcely met her eyes; but he was ready for any

emergency.

The set ended, to Harry Hesketh's satisfaction; and, another set being arranged, he and Mrs. Rotherwas, athletic in a short skirt and simple blouse, came walking, rather flushed and breathless, round the garden with one or two others, including

Harry's late partner.

The conversation turned upon the great South Wales colliery strike against a proposed reduction of wages. Mrs. Rotherwas's husband was a colliery proprietor near Monmouth, and she had just received a letter from him. Every one sympathized with her and her husband, and nobody could comprehend the wrong-headedness of the miners, except upon the supposition that they had been led away by mischievous demagogues.

As the group approached, the timid young girl, having regained her nerve, was exclaiming with honest indignation:

"The leaders ought to be shot, and the men who won't go down the pits ought to be *forced* to go down and *made* to work!"

She picked at fluff on her vellow frock. Edwin feared an uprising from Hilda, but naught happened.

The prison clock tolled the hour, and Mrs. Rotherwas gave a signal for tea.

"You're exhausted," she said teasingly to Harry.

"You'll see," said Harry.

"No," Mrs. Rotherwas delightfully re-lented. "You're a dear, and I love to watch you play. I'm sure you could give Mr. Truscott half fifteen."

"Think so?" said Harry, pleased. "You see what it is to have an object in life, Hesketh," Edwin remarked.

Harry glanced at him doubtfully, and yet with a certain ingenuous admiration.

"Alicia tells me you're very old friends of theirs," said Mrs. Rotherwas, agreeably, to Hilda.

Hilda smiled quietly: "Yes, we are, both of us."

Who could have guessed, now, that her condition was not absolutely normal?

"Charming people, aren't they, the Hes-ths?" said Mrs. Rotherwas. "They're keths?" said Mrs. Rotherwas. an ideal couple. And I do like their home -it's so delightfully quaint, isn't it, Mary?"

"Lovely!" agreed the young girl. It was an ideal world, full of ideal beings.

On arriving at Tavy Mansion, Hilda announced that she would lie down. She told Edwin, in an exhausted but friendly voice, that she needed only rest, and he comprehended, rightly, that he was to leave her. Not a word was said between them as to the events within the prison.

She undressed and got into bed. Alicia, with an infant, and Janet came to see her. She plausibly fibbed to both sisters, and immediately afterward the household knew that Hilda would not appear at dinner.

There was not the slightest alarm or apprehension. Alicia whispered a word to her husband, who, besides, was not apt easily to get nervous about anything except his form at games. Edwin also, with his Five Towns habit of mind, soberly belittled the indisposition. The household remained natural and gay.

When Edwin went up-stairs to prepare for dinner, moving very quietly, his wife had her face toward the wall and away from the light. He came round the bed

to look at her.

"I'm all right," she murmured.

"Want nothing at all?" he asked, with nervous gruffness.

She shook her head.

As soon as he was gone she began to cry; but the tears came so gently from her eyes that the weeping was as passive, as independent of volition, as the escape of blood from a wound.

She had a grievance against Edwin. At the crisis in the prison she had blamed herself for not submitting to his guidance; but now she had reacted against all such accusations, and her grievance amounted to just an indictment of his common sense, his quietude, his talent for keeping out of harm's way, his lack of violent impulses,

his formidable respectability.

She was a rebel; he was not. He would never do anything wrong, or even perilous. Never, never would he find himself in need of a friend's help. He would always direct his course so that society would protect He was the enemy of impulses. When he foresaw a danger, the danger was always realized; she had noticed that, and she resented it.

He was infinitely above the George Cannons of the world. Yet for her the George Cannons had a quality which he lacked, which he could never possess, and which would have impossibly perfected him-a quality heroic, foolish, martyrlike! Could he really feel pity as she felt it, for the despised and rejected, and a hatred of injustice equal to hers?

These two emotions were burning her up. Again and again, ceaselessly, her mind ran round the circle of George Cannon's torture and the callousness of society. He had sinned, and she had loathed him; but both his sin and her loathing were the fruits of passion. He had been a proud man, and she had shared his pride; now he was broken, unutterably humiliated, and she partook of his humiliation.

The grotesque and beaten animal in the corridor was all that society had left of him who had once inspired her to acts of devotion, who could make her blush, and to satisfy whom she would recklessly spend herself. The situation was intolerable, and yet it had to be borne. But surely it must be ended. Surely on the morrow, at the latest, the prisoner must be released, and soothed, and reinstated!

Exhaustion followed, tempering emotion and reducing it to a profound, despairing melancholy that was stirred at intervals by frantic revolt. The light failed. The windows became vague silver squares.

Then there was a faint knock at the door. She made no reply, and shut her eyes. The door gently opened, and some one tripped delicately in. She heard movements at the wash-stand - one of the maids, no doubt. A match was struck. The blinds were stealthily lowered, the curtains drawn, garments gathered together; and at last the door closed again.

She opened her eyes. The room was very dimly illuminated. A night-light, under a glass hemisphere of pale rose, stood on the dressing-table. By magic, order had been restored; a glinting copper ewer of hot water stood in the whiteness of the basin, with a towel over it. Each detail of the chamber was gradually disclosed, and the chamber was steeped in the first tranquillity of the night. Through the depths of her bitterness there rose slowly the sensation of the beauty of existence, even in its sadness.

A long time afterward it occurred to her, in the obscurity, that the bed was tumbled. She must have turned over and over. The bed must be arranged before Edwin came.

He had to share it.

After all, he had committed no fault; he was entirely innocent. She and fate between them had inflicted these difficulties and these solicitudes upon him. He had said little or nothing, but he was sympathetic. When she had stumbled against him she had felt his upholding, masculine strength. He was dependable, and would be dependable to the last.

The bed must be creaseless when he came; this was the least she could do. She arose. Very faintly she could descry her image in the mirror of the great wardrobe -a disheveled image. Forgetting the bed, she bathed her face, and, unusually, took care to leave the wash-stand as tidy as the

maid had left it.

Having arranged her hair, she set about the bed. Then she heard Edwin's voice: "Don't trouble. I'll take it in myself." He entered, carrying a tray, and shut the

door.

"My poor girl!" he said with quiet kindliness. "What are you doing?"

"I'm just putting the bed to rights," she answered, and almost with a single movement she slid back into bed. "What have you got there?"

"I thought I'd ask for some tea for you," he said. "Nearly the whole blessed household wanted to come up and see you, but I wouldn't have it."

He put the tray on the dressing-table: then lit candles, and brought the tray to the night-table. He himself poured out the tea and offered the cup. She raised

herself on an elbow.

"Did you recognize him?" she muttered suddenly, after she had blown on the tea to cool it.

"Not quite," he said. "But I knew at once. I could see which of them it must be."

The subject at last opened between them, Hilda felt an extraordinary solace and relief. He stood by the bedside, in black, with a great breastplate of white, his hair rough, his hands in his pockets. It seemed to her that they had never talked to each other in such tones.

"Isn't it awful-awful?" she exclaimed.

"It is," said Edwin tenderly.

"I want you to read all the letters I've had from Mrs. Cannon. They're in my bag there. Read them now! Of course, I always meant to show them to you."

"All right," agreed Edwin. He drew a chair to the dressing-table where the bag was, found the letters, and read them. She waited as he read one letter, put it down, read another, laid it precisely upon the first one, with his terrible exactitude and orderliness, and so on through the whole packet.

"Yes," said he at the end. "I should say he's innocent this time, right enough."

"But something ought to be done!" she cried. "Don't you think something ought to be done, Edwin?"

"Something has been done. Something is being done.

"But something else!"

He got up and walked about the room. "There's only one thing to be done," he said.

He came toward her and stood over her again, and the candle on the night-table lighted his chin and the space between his eyelashes and his eyebrows. He timidly touched her hair, caressing it. They were absolutely at their ease together in the intimacy of the bedroom. In her brief relations with George Cannon there had not been time to establish anything like such intimacy. With George Cannon she had always had the tremors of the fawn.

"What is it?"

"Wait—that's all. It's not the slightest use trying to hurry these public departments. You can't do it. You only get annoyed for nothing at all. You can take that from me, my child."

He spoke with such persuasiveness, such an evident desire to be helpful, that Hilda

was convinced and grew resigned.

"I wanted to explain to you about that ten pounds," she said.

"That's all right," said he hastily.

"But I must tell you. You saw Mrs. Cannon's letter asking me for money. Well, I borrowed the ten pounds from Janet; so, of course, I had to pay it back, hadn't I?"

"How is Janet?" he asked in a new,

lighter tone.

"She seems to be going on splendidly; don't you think so?"

"Well, then, we'll go home to-morrow."

"Shall we?"

She lifted her arms, and he bent. She was crying. In a moment she was sobbing. She gave him violent kisses amid her sobs, and held him close to her until the fit passed. Then she said, her voice reduced to that of a child:

"What time's the train?"

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CHOST

It was six thirty. The autumn dusk had already begun to fade; and in the damp air, cold, grimy, and vaporous, men with scarfs round their necks and girls with shawls over their heads, or hatted and even gloved, were going home from work past the petty shops where sweets, tobacco, fried fish, chitterlings, groceries, and novelettes were sold among enameled advertisements of magic soap.

In the feeble and patchy illumination of the foot-paths, which left the middle of the streets and the upper air all obscure, the chilled, preoccupied people passed one another rapidly like fantoms, emerging out of one mystery and disappearing into another. Everywhere, behind the fanlights and shaded windows of cottages, domesticity was preparing the warm relaxations of the night.

Amid the streets of little buildings the lithographic establishment, with a yellow oblong here and there illuminated in its dark façades, stood up high, larger than reality, more important and tyrannic, one of the barracks, one of the prisons, one of the money-works where a single man or a small group of men by brains and vigor and rigor exploited the populace.

Edwin, sitting late in his private office behind those façades, was not unaware of the sensation of being an exploiter. By his side on the large, flat desk lay a copy of the afternoon's Signal, containing an account of the breaking up by the police of an open-air meeting of confessed anarchists on the previous day at Manchester. An anarchist meeting at Manchester was indeed an uncomfortable portent for the Five Towns. Enormous strikes, like civil wars at stalemate, characterized the autumn as they had characterized the spring, affecting directly or indirectly every industry, and weakening the prestige of government, conventions, wealth, and success.

Edwin was successful. It was because he was successful that he was staying late, and that a clerk in the outer office was staying late, and that windows were illuminated here and there in the façades.

Holding in his hand the wage-book, he glanced down the long column of names and amounts. Some names conveyed nothing to him; but most of them raised definite images in his mind-of big men, roughs, decent clerks with wristbands, undersized, machinists, intensely respectable skilled artisans and draftsmen, thin, ragged lads, greasy, slatternly, pale girls, and one or two fat women-all dirty, and working with indifference in dirt. Most of them kotowed to him; some did not; some scowled askance. But they were all dependent on him. Not one of them but would be prodigiously alarmed and inconvenienced—to say nothing of going hungry -if he did not pay wages the next morn-The fact was, he could distribute ruin with a gesture.

Something wrong! Under the influence of strikes and anarchist meetings, he felt with foreboding and even with a little personal alarm that something was wrong. Those greasy, slatternly girls, for instance, with their coarse charm and their sexuality—they were underpaid. They received as much as other girls, on pot-banks—perhaps more, but they were underpaid. What chance had they?

He was getting richer every day, and safer—except for the vague menace; yet he could not appreciably improve their lot, partly for business reasons, partly because any attempt to do so would bring the community about his ears, and he would be labeled as a doctrinaire and a fool; and partly because his own common sense was against such a move.

Not those girls, not his works, nor this industry and that, was wrong. All was wrong. And it was impossible to imagine any future period when all would not be wrong. Perfection was a desolating thought. Nevertheless, the struggle toward it was instinctive and had to go on.

He heard Hilda's clear voice in the outer

office:

"Mr. Clayhanger in there?"

Then came the clerk's somewhat nervously agitated reply, repeating several times an eager affirmative. And he himself, the master, though still all alone in the sanctum, at once pretended to be very busy.

Her presence would often produce an excitation in the organism of the business. She was so foreign to it, so unsoiled by it, so aloof from it, so much more gracious, civilized, enigmatic, than anything that

the business could show!

And, fundamentally, she was the cause of the business. It was all for her; it existed with its dirt, grease, noise, crudity, strain, and eternal effort, so that she might exist in her elegance, her disturbing femininity, her restricted and deep affections, her irrational capriciousness, and her strange, brusk common sense.

There was no economic justice in the arrangement. She would come in veiled, her face mysterious behind the veil, and after a few minutes she would delicately lift her gloved fingers to the veil, and raise it, and her dark, pale, vivacious face would

be disclosed.

"Here I am!"

And the balance was even, her debt paid. That was how it was.

In the month that had passed since the visit to Dartmoor, Edwin, despite his resolve to live philosophically, had sometimes been forced into the secret attitude:

"This woman will kill me, but without her I shouldn't be interested enough to

live."

She had heard nothing further from Mrs. Cannon; she knew nothing of the bigamist's fate, though more than once she had written for news. Her moods were unpredictable and disconcerting, and as her moods constituted the chief object of Edwin's study, the effect on him was not tranquilizing. At the start he had risen to the difficulty of the situation; but he could not permanently remain at that height, and the situation had apparently become stationary. His exasperations, both concealed and open, were not merely unworthy of a philosopher, they were unworthy of a common man.

"Why be annoyed?" he would say to

himself.

But he was annoyed. Surely he could remember to command his voice to the right tone? But no! He could not. He could infallibly remember to wind up his watch, but he could not remember that.

Moreover, he felt, as he had felt before, on occasions, that no amount of right tone would keep their relations smooth, for the reason that principles were opposed. Could she not see? Well, she could not. There she was, entire, unalterable; impossible to chip inconvenient pieces off her! And yet some of the most exquisite moments of their union had occurred during that feverish and unquiet month—moments of absolute surrender and devotion on her part, of protective love on his; and also long moments of peace.

And now Edwin in the office thought: "She's come to fetch me away."

He was gratified, but he must not seem to be gratified. The sanctity of business from invasion had to be upheld. He frowned, feigning more diligently than ever to be occupied.

She came in, with that air at once apologetic and defiant that wives have in affronting the sacred fastness. Nobody could have guessed that she had ever been a business woman, arriving regularly at just such an office every morning, shorthand - writing, twisting a copying - press, filing, making appointments.

"Hello, missis!" he exclaimed casually. Then George came in. Since the visit to Dartmoor, Hilda had much increased her intimacy with George, spending much time with him, walking with him, and exploring in a sisterly and reassuring manner his most private life.

"You needn't come in here, George,"

said Hilda.

"Well, can I go into the engine-house?" George suggested.

"No, you can't," said Edwin. "Pratt's gone by this, and it's shut up."

"No, it isn't. Pratt's there."

" All right!"

"Shut the door, dear," said Hilda.

"Hooray!" George ran off and banged the glass door.

Holding out a letter which she nervously snatched from her bag, Hilda said:

"I've just had this, by the afternoon post. Read it."

He recognized at once the shaky, sloping handwriting; but the paper was different; it was a mere torn half-sheet of very cheap note-paper. He read:

DEAR MRS. CLAYHANGER:

Just a line to say that my husband is at last discharged. It has been weary waiting. We are together, and I am looking after him. With renewed thanks for your sympathy and help, believe me.

Sincerely yours,

CHARLOTTE M. CANNON.

There was no address, no date.

Edwin was happy in an intense relief that affected all his being. He said to

"Now that's over, we can begin again!" "Well," he murmured, "that's all right. Didn't I always tell you it would take some time? That's all right."

He gazed at the paper, waving it in his hand as he held it by one corner. He perceived that it was the letter of a jealous woman, who had got what she wanted and meant to hold it entirely to herself.

"Very curt, isn't it?" said Hilda strange-"And after all this time, too!"

He looked up at her, turning his head sidewise to catch her eyes.

"That letter," he said, in a voice as strange as Hilda's, "that letter is exactly what it ought to be. It could not possibly have been better turned. You don't

want to keep it, I suppose, do you?"

"No," she muttered.

He tore it into very small pieces, and dropped them into the waste-paper basket beneath the desk.

"And burn all the others," he said in a low tone.

" Edwin," after a pause.

"Yes?"

"Don't you think George ought to know? Don't you think one of us ought to tell him-either you or I? You might

"Tell him what?" Edwin demanded sharply, pushing back his chair.

"Well, everything!"

He glowered. He could feel himself glowering; he could feel the justifiable anger animating him.

"Certainly not!" he enunciated resentfully, masterfully, overpoweringly.

"But he's bound to know some time." " Possibly; but he isn't going to know now-not with my consent. The thing's absolute madness."

Hilda almost whispered:

"Very well, dear, if you think so."
"I do think so." He suddenly felt very sorry for her. He added with brusk good nature: " And so will you, in the morning, my child."

"Shall you be long?"

"No. I told you I should be late. If you'll run off, my chuck, I'll undertake to be after you in half an hour."

" Is your headache better?"

" No. On the other hand, it isn't worse." He gazed fiercely at the wages-book. She bent down.

"Kiss me," she murmured tearfully.

As he kissed her, and as she pressed against him, he absorbed and understood all the emotions through which she had passed and was passing, and from him to her was transmitted an unimaginable tenderness that shamed and atoned for the inclemency of his refusals.

"I have to call at Clara's about that wool for Maggie," she said with courage. "I'll bring the kid up," he said.

" Will you?"

She departed, leaving the door unlatched.

A draft from the outer door swung wide open the unlatched door of Edwin's room, "Simpson! Shut the outer door-and

this one, too." There was no answer. He arose and went to the outer office. Hilda had passed through it like an arrow. Simpson was not there; but a man stood leaning against the mantelpiece; he held at full spread a copy of the Signal, which concealed all the upper part of him except his fingers and the crown of his head. He lowered the newspaper and looked at Edwin.

He was a big, well-dressed man, wearing a dark gray suit, a blue melton overcoat, and a quite new glossy "boiler-end" felt hat. He had a straight, prominent nose, and dark, restless eyes, set back; his short hair was getting gray, but not his short, black mustache.

"Were you waiting to see me?" Edwin said in a defensive, half-hostile tone.

"Yes," was the reply, in a deep, full, and yet uncertain voice. "The clerk said you couldn't be disturbed, and asked me to wait. Then he went out."

"What can I do for you? It's really after hours, but some of us are working

a bit late."

"I'm George Cannon," the man said, advancing a step, as it were defiantly.

For an instant Edwin was frightened by the sudden melodrama of the situation. Then he thought:

"I'm up against this man. This is a

crisis!"

Forgetful of what the man had suffered, Edwin felt for him nothing but the instinctive inimical distrust of the individual who has never got at loggerheads with society for the individual who once and for always has. To this feeling was added a powerful resentment of the man's act in coming—especially unannounced—to him, the husband of the woman he had dishonored. He felt an impulse to say savagely:

"Look here, you clear out! You understand English, don't you? Hook it!"

But he had not the brutality to say it. Moreover, the clerk returned, carrying, full to the brim, the tin water-receptacle used for wetting the damping-brush of the copying-press.

"Will you come in, please?" said Edwin curtly. "Simpson, I'm engaged."

The two men went into the inner room. "Sit down," said Edwin grimly.

George Cannon, with a firm gesture, planted his hat on the flat desk between them. He looked round behind him at the shut, glazed door.

"You needn't be afraid," said Edwin.
"Nobody can hear—unless you shout."

He gazed curiously but somewhat surreptitiously at George Cannon, trying to decide whether it was possible to see in him a released convict. He decided that it was not possible.

George Cannon had a shifty, but not a beaten, look; many men had a shifty look. His hair was somewhat short, but so was the hair of many men, if not most. He was apparently in fair health; assuredly his constitution had not been ruined. And if his large, coarse features were worn, marked with tiny, black spots, and seamed and generally ravaged, they were not more

ravaged than the features of numerous citizens of Bursley aged about fifty who saved money, earned honors, and incurred the envy of presumably intelligent persons.

As he realized all this, Edwin's retrospective painful alarm as to what might have happened if Hilda had noticed George Cannon in the outer office lessened until he could dismiss it entirely. By chance she had ignored George Cannon, perhaps scarcely seeing him in her preoccupied passage, perhaps taking him vaguely for a customer; but supposing she had recognized him, what then? There would have been an awkward scene—nothing more.

"Did she recognize me—down there— Dartmoor?" asked George Cannon, in a deep, trembling voice; and as he spoke a flush spread slowly over his dark features.

"Er-yes," answered Edwin, and his

voice also trembled.

"I wasn't sure. We were halted before I could see. And I daren't look round—I should have been punished. I've been punished before now for looking up at the sky at exercise." He spoke more quickly, and then brought himself up with a snort. "However, I've not come all the way here to talk prison, so you needn't be afraid. I'm not one of your reformers."

The strange opening question, and its accent, had stirred Edwin, and he saw with remorse how much finer had been Hilda's morbid and violent pity than his own harsh common sense and anxiety to avoid emotion. He was exceedingly humbled.

"This chap's still attached to her—poor devil!" he thought sadly. "What have

you come for?" he inquired.

George Cannon cleared his throat. Edwin waited in fear for the avowal. He could make nothing out of the visitor's face; its expression was anxious and drew sympathy, but there was something in it which chilled the sympathy it invoked and which seemed to say:

"I shall look after myself."

It yielded naught. You could be sorry for the heart within, and yet could neither

like nor esteem it.

Punished for looking up at the sky! Glimpses of prison life presented themselves to Edwin's imagination. He saw George Cannon again halted and turning like a serf to the wall of the corridor. And this man opposite to him, close to him in the familiar room, was the same man as the serf!

"You know all about it-about my affair, of course."

"Well," said Edwin, "I expect you know how much I know."

"I'm an honest man, you know that. I needn't begin by explaining that to you."

Edwin nerved himself:

"You weren't honest toward Hilda, if it comes to that."

He used his wife's Christian name, to this man with whom he had never before spoken, naturally, inevitably.

"When I say 'honest' I mean—you know what I mean. About Hilda—I don't defend that. Only I couldn't help myself. I dare say I should do it again. It's no use talking about it. That's over. She's not harmed, and I thank God for it! If there'd been a child living—well, it would have been different."

Edwin started. This man didn't know he was a father, and his son was within a few yards of him—might come running in at any moment! Was it possible that Hilda had concealed the existence of her child, or had announced the child's death? If so, she had never done a wiser thing, and such sagacity struck him as heroic.

George Cannon began again:

"All I mean is I'm an honest man. I've been damnably treated. Not that I want to go into that. I'm a fatalist. That's over. That's done with. I'm not whining. Perhaps I brought my difficulties about that bank-note business on myself; but when you've been in prison, you don't choose your friends—you can't. Perhaps I might have ended by being a thief or a forger, but on this occasion it just happens I've had a good six years for being innocent. I never did anything wrong, or even silly, except let myself get too fond of somebody. You understand? I never—"

"Yes, yes, certainly!" said Edwin, stopping him as he was about to repeat all the

argument afresh.

"No one's got the right to look down on me, I mean," George Cannon insisted, leaning forward over the desk. "On the contrary, this country owes me an apology. However, that's done with. Spilt milk's spilt. I know what the world is."

"I agree! I agree!" said Edwin.

"Well, to cut it short, I want help, and I've come to you for it."

"Me!" Edwin feebly exclaimed.

"You, Mr. Clayhanger! I've come straight here from London. I haven't a

friend in the whole world, no one. It's not everybody can say that. I've no claim on you. You don't know me; but you know about me. When I saw you in Dartmoor I guessed who you were, and I said to myself you looked the sort of man who might help another man. Why did you come into the prison? Why did you bring her there? You must have known I was there." He spoke with a sudden change to reproachfulness.

"I didn't bring her there," Edwin

olushed.

"Was she upset?"
"Of course."

Cannon sighed.

"What do you want?" asked Edwin.

In secret he was rather pleased that
George Cannon should have deemed him
of the sort likely to help.

"Money!" said Cannon sharply.
"Money! You won't feel it, but it will save
me. After all, Mr. Clayhanger, there's a
bond between us, if it comes to that.
There's a bond between us. And you've

had all the luck of it."

Again Edwin blushed.

"But surely your wife—" he stammered. "Surely Mrs. Cannon isn't without funds. Of course, I know she was temporarily rather short a while back, but I've always understood that she's a woman of property."

Cannon put both elbows on the desk, leaned farther forward, and opened his mouth several seconds before speaking.

"Mr. Clayhanger, I've left my wife—as you call her. If I'd stayed with her I should have killed her. I've run off. Yes, I know all she's done for me. I know that without her I might have been in prison to-day and for a couple of years to come. But I'd sooner be in prison, or in hell, or anywhere you like, than with Mrs. Cannon. She's an old woman. She always was an old woman. She was nearly forty when she hooked me, and I was twentytwo. And I'm young yet. I'm not middleaged yet. She's got a clear conscience, Mrs. Cannon has. She always does her duty. She'd let me walk over her, and she'd never complain, if only she could keep me. She'd just pray and smile. Oh, yes, she'd turn the other cheek, and keep on turning it. But she isn't going to have

He spoke loudly, excitedly, under considerable emotion.

"H'sh!" Edwin, alarmed, endeavored

gently to soothe him.

"All right! All right!" Cannon proceeded in a lower but still impassioned "But look here! You're a man. You know what's what. You'll understand what I mean. Believe me when I say that I wouldn't live with that woman for eternal salvation. I couldn't do it. I've taken some of her money, only a little, and run off." He paused, and went on, with conscious persuasiveness now: "I've just got here. Now I've seen you I shall get along to Crewe to-night. I shall be safer there. And it's on the way to Liverpool and America. With a bit of capital I shall be all right in America. It's my one chance, and it's a good one; but I must have capital. No use landing in New York with empty pockets!"

"I was under the impression you had

been to America once."

"Yes, that's why I know. I hadn't any money. And what's more," he added with peculiar emphasis, "I was brought back."

At that instant Edwin saw the shadow of Hilda's head and shoulders on the glass of

the door.

"Excuse me a second," he murmured, bounded with astonishing velocity out of the room, and pulled the door to after him with a bang.

Hilda, having observed the strange, excited gesture, paused a moment, in an equally strange tranquillity, before speaking. Edwin fronted her at the very door. Then she said, clearly and deliberately, through her veil:

"Aunty Hamps has had an attack heart. The doctor says she can't possibly live through the night. It was at Clara's."

"Ah!" breathed Edwin, with an apparently purely artistic interest in the affair. "So that's it, is it? Then she's at Clara's?"

"Yes."

"What doctor?"

"I forget his name. Lives in Acre Lane. They sent for the nearest. She can't get her breath — has to fight for it. She jumped out of bed struggling for breath."

"Have you seen her?"
"Yes. They made me."

" Albert there?"

" Yes."

"Well, I suppose I'd better go round. You go back. I'll follow you."

He was conscious of not the slightest feeling of sorrow at the imminent death of Aunty Hamps. Even the image of the old lady fighting to fetch her breath scarcely moved him, though the death-bed of his father had been harrowing enough.

"I must speak to you," said Hilda, low, and moved toward the inner door.

The clerk Simpson was behind them at his ink-stained desk, stamping letters, and politely pretending to be deaf. "No," Edwin stopped her. "There's

"No," Edwin stopped her. "There's some one in there. We can't talk there."

" A customer?"

"Yes. I say, Simpson, have you done those letters?"

"Yes, sir," said Simpson, smiling.

"Take them to the pillar, and call at Mr. Benbow's and tell them that I'll be round in about a quarter of an hour. I don't know as you need come back."

"Yes, sir."

Edwin and Hilda watched Simpson go. "What ever's the matter?" Hilda demanded in a low, harsh voice, as soon as the outer door had clicked. It was as if something sinister in her had been suddenly released.

" Matter? Nothing. Why?"

"You look so queer."

"Well, you come along with these shocks!" He gave a short, awkward laugh. He felt and looked guilty, and he knew that he looked guilty.

"You looked queer when you came out."
"You've upset yourself, my child, that's

all "

He now realized the high degree of excitement which he himself, without previously being aware of it, had reached.

"Edwin, who is it in there?"

"Didn't I tell you? It's a customer."
He could see her nostrils twitching

through the veil.
"It's George Cannon in there!" she ex-

claimed. He laughed again.

"What makes you think that?" he asked, feeling all the while the complete

absurdity of such fencing.

"When I ran out I noticed somebody. He was reading a newspaper, and I couldn't see him; but he just moved a bit, and I seemed to catch sight of the top of his head. When I got into the street? said to myself it looked like George Cannon, and then I said of course it couldn't be. And then with this business about

Aunty Hamps the idea went right out of my head."

"Well, it is, if you want to know."

Her mysterious body and face seemed to radiate a disastrous emotion that filled the whole office.

"Did you know he was coming?"

"I did not. Hadn't the least notion!" The sensation of criminality began to leave Edwin. As Hilda seemed to move and waver, he added: "Now you aren't

going to see him!"

His voice menacingly challenged her, and defied her to stir a step. The most important thing in the world, then, was that Hilda should not see George Cannon. He would stop her by force. He would let himself get angry and brutal. would show her that he was the stronger. He had quite abandoned his earlier attitude of unsentimental callousness which argued that after all it wouldn't ultimately matter whether they encountered each other or not.

"What does he want?"

"He wants me to help him to go to America."

"You!"

"He says he hasn't a friend."

"But what about his wife?" "That's just what I said. He's left her.

Says he can't live with her." There was a silence, in which the tension

appreciably lessened.

"Can't live with her! Well, I'm not surprised. But I do think it's strange, him

coming to you."

"So do I," said Edwin dryly. "But there's a lot of strange things in this world. Now listen here. I'm not going to keep him waiting; I can't." He spoke very gravely, authoritatively, and ominously. "Find George and take him home at once."

Hilda, impressed, gave a frown.

"I think it's very wrong that you should be asked to help him." Her voice shook and nearly broke. "Shall you help him,

Edwin?"

"I shall get him out of this town at once, and out of the country. Do as I say. As things are, he doesn't know there is any George, and it's just as well he shouldn't; but if he stays anywhere about, he's bound to know."

All Hilda's demeanor admitted that George Cannon had never been allowed to know that he had a son; and the simple candor of the admission frightened Edwin by its very simplicity.

"Now! Off you go! George is in the

engine-room."

"Nobody but you would have helped him-in your place!" Hilda murmured passionately, half admiring, half protesting. And with a backward look as she hurried off, her face, stern and yet soft, seemed to appeal: "Help him!"

Edwin went back to the private room, self-conscious and rather tongue-tied, with a clear feeling of relief that Hilda was disposed of removed from the equationand not unsuccessfully. After the woman, to deal with the man, in the plain language of men, seemed simple and easy.

He looked at George Cannon, and George Cannon, with his unreliable eyes, looked

"Are you going to help me?" asked George Cannon, after a moment, and his heavy voice was so beseeching, so humble, so surprisingly sycophantic, so fearful, that Edwin could scarcely bear to hear it.

"Yes," said he. "I shall do what I can.

What do you want?"

"A hundred pounds," said George Can-

As he named the sum, his glance was hard and steady. Edwin was startled; but immediately he began to readjust his ideas, persuading himself that after all the man could not prudently have asked for less.

"I can't give you all of it now."

Cannon's face lighted up with relief and joy. Although he did not move, his selfcontrol had for the moment gone completely, and the secrets of his soul were

"Can you send it to me-in notes? I can give you an address in Liverpool." His voice could hardly utter the words.

"Wait a second," said Edwin. He went to the safe let into the wall, of which he was still so naively proud, and unlocked it with the owner's gesture. He savored his ability to rescue people from destruction.

From the cavern of the safe he took out a bag of gold, part of the money required for wages on the morrow-he would have to send to the bank again in the morning. He knew that the bag contained exactly twenty pounds in half-sovereigns, but he shed the lovely, twinkling coins on the desk and counted them,

"Here," he said. "Here's twenty pounds. Take the bag, too—it 'll be handier." He put the money into the bag. Then a foolish, grand idea struck him. "Write down the address on the envelope, will you, and I'll send you a hundred tomorrow. You can rely on it."

"Eighty, you mean," muttered George

Cannon.

"No," said Edwin, with affected nonchalance, blushing. "A hundred. The twenty will get you over, and you'll have a hundred clear when you land."

"You're very kind," said Cannon

weakly. "I-"

Edwin stopped him hastily. His fear of being thanked made him harsh.

"Here-here's the envelope. Here's a

bit of pencil."

"You'll get it all back. You'll see," said Cannon, as he stood up to leave.

Edwin smiled, deprecating the idea.

"Well, good luck!" he said. "You'll get to Crewe all right. There's a train at

Shawport at eight seven."

They shook hands, and quitted the inner office. As he traversed the outer office on his way forth, in front of Edwin, Cannon turned his head, as if to say something, but, confused, he said nothing and went on, and at once he disappeared into the darkness outside. Edwin was left with a memory of his dubious eyes, hard rather than confident, profoundly relieved rather than profoundly grateful.

Hilda and her son were in the diningroom, in which the table, set for a special meal, half tea, half supper, made a glittering oblong of white. On the table, among plates and knives and forks, lay some of George's shabby school-books.

In most branches of knowledge George privately knew that he could instruct his parents — especially his mother. Nevertheless, the beloved outgrown creature was still occasionally useful at home lessons, as for instance in "poetry." George, disdainful, had to learn some verses each week, and now his mother held a book entitled "The Poetry Reciter," while George mumbled with imperfect verbal accuracy the apparently immortal lines:

Abou Ben Adhem, may his tribe increase, Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace.

His mother, however, scarcely regarded the book. She knew the poem by heart, and had indeed recited it to George, who, though he was much impressed by her fire, could not by any means have been persuaded to imitate the freedom of her

delivery.

His elocution to-night was unusually bad, for the reason that he had been pleasurably excited by the immense news of Aunty Hamps's illness. Not that he had any grudge against Aunty Hamps! His pleasure would have been as keen in the grave illness of any other important family connection, save his mother and Edwin. Such notable events gave a sensational interest to domestic life which domestic life as a rule lacked.

Then, through the half-open door of the dining-room, came the sound of Edwin's

latch-key in the front door.

"There's uncle!" exclaimed George, and jumped up.

Hilda stopped him.

"Put your books together," said she.
"You know uncle likes to go up to the bath-room before he does anything."

It was a fact that the precisian hated even to be greeted on his return home in the evenings, until he came down-stairs from the bath-room.

Hilda herself collected the books and put them on the sideboard.

"CL-11 T (-11 A 1-2)" C

"Shall I tell Ada?" George suggested, champing the bit.

" No. Ada knows."

With deliberation Hilda tended the fire. Her mind was in a state of emotional flux. Memories and comparisons mournfully and yet agreeably animated it. She thought of the days when she used to recite amid enthusiasm in the old drawing-room of the Orgreaves; of the days when she was a wanderer, had no home, no support, little security; of the brief, uncertain days with George Cannon; and of the eternal days when her only assurance was the assurance of disaster.

She glanced at George, and saw in him reminders of his tragic, secret father now hidden away, forced into the background, like something obscene. Nearly every development of the present out of the past seemed to her, now, to be tragic.

Johnnie Orgreave, of course, had not come back from his idyl with the ripping Mrs. Chris Hamson. Their seclusion was not positively known; but the whole district knew that the husband had begun proceedings, and that the Orgreave business was being damaged by the incom-

petence of Jimmie Orgreave.

Janet was still at Tavy Mansion, because there was no place for her in the Five Towns. Janet had written to Hilda, sadly, and the letter breathed her sense of her own futility and superfluousness in the social scheme.

In one curt phrase, that very afternoon, the taciturn Maggie, who very seldom complained, had disclosed something of what it was to live day and night with Aunty Hamps. Even Clara, the self-sufficient, protected by an almost impermeable armor of conceit, showed signs of the anxiety due to obscure chronic disease and a husband who financially never knew where he was. Finally, the last glories of Aunty Hamps were sinking to ashes.

Only Hilda herself was, from nearly every point of view, in a satisfactory and promising situation. She possessed love, health, money, stability. When danger threatened, a quiet and unfailingly sagacious husband was there to meet and destroy it. Surely nothing whatever worth mentioning, save the fact that she was distantly approaching forty, troubled her existence; and her age assuredly did not trouble her.

Ada entered with the hot dishes, and

went out.

At length Hilda heard the bath-room door. She left the dining-room, shutting the door on George, who could take a hint very well, considering his years. Edwin, brushed and spruce, was coming downstairs, rubbing his clean hands with physical satisfaction.

"Has he gone?" said Hilda, in a low voice.

Edwin nodded.

"How much did you give him?"

He smiled, and touched her shoulder. She liked him to touch her shoulder.

"That's all right," he said, with a faint condescension. "Don't you worry about that."

She did not press the point. He could be free enough with information—except when it was demanded. Some time later he would of his own accord begin to talk.

"How was Aunty Hamps?"

"Well, if anything, she's a bit easier. I don't mind betting she gets over it."

They went into the dining-room almost side by side, and she inquired again about his headache. The meal was tranquil. After a few moments Edwin opened the subject of Aunty Hamps's illness with some sardonic remarks upon the demeanor of Albert Benbow.

"Is aunty dying?" said George with gusto.

Edwin replied:

"What are those school-books doing there on the sideboard? I thought it was clearly understood that you were to do your lessons in your mother's boudoir."

He spoke without annoyance, but coldly. He was aware that neither Hilda nor her son could comprehend that to a bookman school-books were not books, but an eyesore. He did not blame them for their incapacity, but he considered that an arrangement was an arrangement.

"Mother put them there," said the base

George

"Well, you can take them away," said Edwin firmly. "Run along now."

George rose from his place between Hilda and Edwin, and from his luscious plate, and removed the books. Hilda watched him meekly go. His father, too, had gone. Edwin was in the right; his position could not be assailed. He had not been unpleasant, but he had spoken as one sublimely confident that his order would not be challenged.

In her heart Hilda rebelled. If Edwin had been responsible for some act contrary to one of her decrees, she would never in his presence have used the tone that he used to enforce obedience. She would have laughed or she would have frowned, but she would never have been the polite autocrat. Nor would he have expected her to play the rôle; he would probably have resented it.

Why? Were they not equals? No, they were not equals. The fundamental, unuttered assumption upon which the household life rested was that they were not equals. She might cross him, she might momentarily defy him, she might torture him, she might drive him to fury, and still be safe from any effective reprisals, because his love for her made her necessary to his being; but in spite of all that, his will remained the seat of government, and she and George were only the opposition. In the end she had to incline.

She was the complement of his existence, but he was not the complement of hers. She was just a parasite, though an essential parasite. Why? The reason, she judged, was economic, and solely economic.

She rebelled. Was she not as individual, as original, as he? Had she not a powerful mind of her own, experience of her own, ideals of her own? Was she not of a na-

ture profoundly independent?

Her lot was unalterable. She was a captive, and she recalled with a gentle pang, less than regret, the days when she was unhappy and free as a man, when she could say, "I will go to London," "I will leave London," "I am deceived and ruined, but I am my own mistress."

In the idyllic tranquillity of the meal, below her smiling preoccupations of an honored house-mistress, these thoughts mingled with the thoughts of her love for her husband and her son, of their excellences, of the masculine love which enveloped and shielded her, of her security, of the tragedy of the bribed and dismissed victim and villain, George Cannon, of the sorrows of some of her friends, and of the dead. In her heart was the unquiet whispering:

"I submit, and yet I shall never

submit!"

## CHAPTER XVII

### GEORGE'S EYES

HILDA sat alone in the boudoir, before the fire. She had just come out of the kitchen, and she was wearing the white uniform of the kitchen, unsuited for a boudoir; but she wore it with piquancy.

The November afternoon had passed into dusk, and through the window, over the roofs of Hulton Street, stars could be seen in the darkening, clear sky. After a very sharp fall and rise of the barometer, accounting for heavy rain-storms, the first frosts were announced, and winter was on the door-step. The hardy inhabitants of the Five Towns, Hilda among them, were bracing themselves to the discipline of winter with its mud, increased smuts, sleet, and damp, piercing chills; and they were taking pleasure in the tonic prospect of discomfort.

Hilda was exhilarated, having been reawakened to the zest and the romance of life, not merely by the onset of winter but by dramatic events in the kitchen.

A little more than three years had elapsed since the closing of the episode of George Cannon, and for two of those years Hilda had had peace in the kitchen. Then the cook, with the ingratitude of a cherished domestic, had fallen in love and carried her passion into a cottage miles away at Longshaw.

From that moment Hilda had ceased to be the mistress who by firmness commands fate; she had become as other mistresses. In a year she had had five cooks. She had even dismissed the slim and constant Ada once, but, yielding to an outburst of penitent affection, had withdrawn the

notice.

The last cook, far removed from youthfulness or prettiness, had left suddenly that day, after insolence, after the discovery of secret beer and other vileness in the attic bedroom, after a scene in which Hilda had absolutely silenced her, reducing ribaldry to sobs. Cook and trunk expelled, Hilda had gone about the house like a fumigation, and into the kitchen like the embodiment of calm and gay efficiency. She would do the cooking herself.

Edwin knew nothing, for all had happened since his departure to the works after midday dinner. He would be back in due course, and George would be back, and Tertius Ingpen—long ago reconciled—was coming for the evening. She would show them all three what a meal was, and incidentally Ada would learn what a meal

was

She had just lived through her thirtyninth birthday.

"Forty!" she had murmured to herself with a shiver of apprehension, meaning that the next would be the fortieth.

It was an unpleasant experience. She had told Edwin not to mention her birthday abroad. She had not been happy on that birthday. She had gazed into the glass and decided that she looked old, that she did not look old, that she looked old, endlessly alternating. She was not stout, but her body was solid, too solid; it had no litheness, none whatever; it was absolutely set; the cleft under the chin was quite undeniable, and the olive complexion subtly ravaged. Still, not a hair of her dark head had changed color. It was perhaps her soul that was graying.

Her married life was fairly calm. It had grown monotonous in ease and tranquillity. The sharp, respectful admiration for her husband roused in her by his handling of the Cannon episode had gradually been dulled. She had nothing against him. Yet she had everything against him, because, apart from his great abiding love for her, he possessed an object and an interest in life, and because she was a mere complement and he was not.

She had asked herself the most dreadful of questions: "Why have I lived? Why do I go on living?" and had answered: "Because of them," meaning Edwin and

her son.

But it was not enough for her, who had once been violently enterprising, pugnacious, endangered, and independent. For after she had watched over them she had energy to spare, and such energy was not being employed and could not be employed. Reading—a diversion! Fancywork—a detestable device for killing time and energy! Social duties—ditto! Charity—hateful! She had slowly descended into marriage as into a lotus valley; and more than half her life was gone.

Now the affair of the alcoholic cook, aided by winter's first fillip, stimulated and brightened her. And while thinking, with a glance at the clock, of the precise moment when she must return to the kitchen and put a dish down to the fire, she also thought, rather hopefully and then quite hopefully, about the future of her marriage.

Her brain seemed to straighten and correct itself. She saw that everything could and must be improved, that the new life must begin. Edwin needed to be inspired; she must inspire him. He slouched more and more in his walk; he was more and more absorbed in his business, quieter in the evenings, more impatient in the

mornings.

Moreover, the household machine had been getting slack. A general tonic was required; she would administer it—and to herself also. They should all feel the invigorating ozone that very night. She would organize social distractions; on behalf of the home she would reclaim from the works those odd hours and half-hours of Edwin's which it had imperceptibly filched. She would have some new clothes, and she would send Edwin to the tailor's. She would make him buy a dog-cart and a horse. In a word, she would "branch out."

She was not sure that she would not prosecute a campaign for putting Edwin on the town council, where he certainly ought to be. She saw him mayor, and herself mayoress. Once the prospect of any such formal honor would have annoyed if not frightened her; but now she thought, proudly and timidly and desirously, that she would make as good a mayoress as most mayoresses, and that she could set one or two of them an example in tact and in dignity. Why not?

And she had still another and perhaps a greater ambition—to possess a country house. In her fancy her country house was very like Alicia Hesketh's house, Tavy Mansion, which she had never ceased to envy. She felt that in a new home, spacious, with space around it, she could really

commence the new life.

She saw the place perfectly appointed and functioning perfectly—no bother about smuts on white curtains; no half-trained servants; none of the base, confined promiscuity of filthy Trafalgar Road; and the Benbows and Aunty Hamps at least eight or ten miles off! She saw herself driving Edwin to the station in the morning, or perhaps right into Bursley, if she wanted to shop.

She would leave old Darius Clayhanger's miracle-house without one regret. And in the new life she would be always active, busy, dignified, elegant, influential, and kind. To Edwin she would be absolutely

indispensable.

In these imaginings their solid but tarnished love glittered and gleamed again. She was persuaded that there really was nobody like Edwin, and that no marriage had ever had quite the mysterious, secretly exciting quality of hers. She yearned for him to come home, to appear magically in the dusk of the doorway. The mood was marvelous.

The door opened.

"Can I speak to you, m'm?"

It was the voice of Ada, somewhat perturbed. She advanced a little and stood darkly in front of the open doorway.

"What is it, Ada?" Hilda asked curtly,

without turning to look at her.

"It's—" Ada began, and stopped.
Hilda glanced round quickly, recognizing now in the voice a peculiar note with which experience had familiarized her. It was a note between pertness and the beginning of a sob, and it always indicated that Ada was feeling more acutely than usual the vast injustice of the worldly scheme.

"If this stupid girl wants trouble," she thought, "she has come to me at exactly and precisely the right moment to get it."

"What is it, Ada?" she repeated, without restraint, and yet warningly. "And where are your cap and your apron?"

"In the kitchen, m'm."

"Well, go and put them on, and then come and say what you have to say," said Hilda.

"I was thinking I'd better give ye notice, m'm," said Ada, and she said it pertly, ignoring the command.

Hilda asked quietly:

"What's the matter now?"

She knew that Ada's grievance would prove to be silly. The girl had practically no common sense. Not one servant girl in a hundred had any appreciable common sense. And when girls happened to be "upset"—as they were all liable to be, and as Ada no doubt was by the violent departure of the cook—even such minute traces of gumption as they possessed were apt to disappear.

"There's no pleasing you, m'm!" said Ada. She threw her head back, and the gesture signified: "I'm younger than you, and young men are always running after me. I can get a new situation any time. And I've not gone back into my kitchen

to put my cap and apron on."

"Ada," said Hilda, "shall I tell you what's wrong with you? You're a little fool. You know you're talking right-down nonsense. You know that as well as I do. And you know you'll never get a better place than you have here. But you've taken an idea into your head—and there you are! You say you think you'd better give notice. Think it over before you do anything ridiculous."

"I think I'd better give notice, m'm, especially seeing I'm a fool," Ada per-

sisted.

Hilda sighed. Her voice hardened

slightly:

"So you'd leave me without a maid just at Christmas? And that's all the thanks I

get for all I've done for you!"

"Well, m'm, we've had such a queer lot of girls here lately, haven't we?" The pertness was intensified. "I don't hardly care to stay. I feel we should both be better for a change like."

It was perhaps Ada's subtly insolent use of the words "we" and "both" that definitely brought about a new phase of the interview. Hilda suddenly lost all desire for an amicable examination of the crisis.

"Very well, Ada," she said shortly.

"But remember, I sha'n't take you back

again, whatever happens."

Ada moved away and then returned.

"Could I leave at once, m'm, same as cook?"

Hilda was astonished and outraged, despite all her experience and its resulting secret sardonic cynicism in regard to servants. The girl was ready to walk out instantly.

"And may I inquire where you'd go to?" asked Hilda with a sneer. "At this time of night you couldn't possibly get

home to your parents."

"Oh!" answered Ada brightly. "I could go to me cousin's, up at Toft End. And her could send down a lad with a barrow for me box."

The plot, then, had been thought out. "Her cousin's!" thought Hilda, and seemed to be putting her finger on the cause of Ada's disloyalty. "Her cousin's!" It was light in a dark mystery.

"I suppose you know you're forfeiting the wages due to you the day after to-

morrow?"

"I shall ask me cousin about that, m'm," said Ada, as it were menacingly. "There's those as 'll see as I have me rights."

Hilda had a mind to retort in anger; but she controlled herself. Already that afternoon she had imperiled her dignity in the altercation with the cook. The cook, however, had not Ada's ready tongue.

"That will do, then, Ada," she said.
"You can go and pack your box first

thing."

In less than three-quarters of an hour Ada was gone, and her corded trunk lay just within the scullery door, waiting the arrival of the cousin's barrow. She had bumped it down the stairs herself.

All solitary in the house, which had somehow been transformed into a strange and unusual house, Hilda wept. She had only parted with an unfaithful and ungrateful servant, but she wept. She dashed into the kitchen and began to do Ada's work, still weeping, and she was savage against her own tears.

Ada had left everything in a moment. She had cared naught for the inconvenience she was causing; had shown not the slightest consideration; had walked off without a pang, smilingly hoity-toity. And all

servants were like that.

She had made Ada. She had created her. True, Ada had been in one situation prior to Hilda's, but it was a situation where she learned nothing and could have learned nothing. Nevertheless, she was very quick to learn, and in a month Hilda had done wonders with her. She had taught her not only her duties, but how to respect herself, to make the best of herself, and favorably to impress others. She had enormously increased Ada's value in the universe. She had taught her some worldly wisdom, and permitted and even encouraged certain coquetries.

Also, she had very conscientiously nursed her in sickness. She had really liked Ada, and had developed a sentimental weakness for her. She had taken pleasure in her prettiness, in her natural grace, and in her crude youth. Ada's stupidity—that half-cunning stupidity of her class, which immovably underlay her superficial aptitudes—had not sufficed to spoil her affection for the girl. She had argued, in moments of discouragement, that at any rate stupid-

ity could be faithful.

In her heart she had counted Ada as a friend, as a true standby in the more or less tragic emergencies of the household. And now Ada had deserted her. Stupidity had proved to be neither faithful nor

grateful.

Why had Ada been so silly and so base?
Impossible to say! A nothing! A whim!
Nerves! Fatuity! The whole affair was horribly absurd. These creatures were incalculable.

One truth emerged, and it was the great truth of house-mistresses—namely, that it never, never, never pays to be too kind to servants. "Servants do not understand kindness." You think they do; they themselves think they do; but they don't—they

don't and they don't.

Hilda went back into the immensity of her desolating experience as an employer of female domestic servants of all kinds, but chiefly bad—for the landlady of a small boarding-house must take what servants she can get—and she raged at the persistence of the proof that kindness never paid. What did pay was severity and inhuman strictness, and the maintenance of an impassable gulf between employer and employed. Not again would she make the

mistake which she had made a hundred times.

And all the time it was the woman in her, not the mistress, that the hasty, thoughtless Ada had wounded. To the woman the kitchen was not the same place without Ada—Ada on whom she had utterly relied in the dilemma caused by the de-

parture of the cook.

All that the world, and the husband, would know or understand was that a cook had been turned out for drunkenness, and that a quite sober parlor-maid had most preposterously walked after her. Hilda was aware that in Edwin she had a severe, though a taciturn, critic of her activities as employer of servants. She had no hope whatever of his sympathy, and so she closed all her gates against him. She waited for him as for an adversary, and all the luster faded from her conception of their love.

When Edwin approached his home that frosty evening he was disturbed to perceive that there was no light from the hall gas shining through the panes of the front door, though some light showed at the dining-room window, the blinds of which had not been drawn.

"What next?" he thought crossly.

He was tired, and the keenness of the weather, instead of bracing him, merely made him petulant. He was astonished that several women in a house could all forget such an important act as lighting the hall gas at nightfall. Never before had it been forgotten, and the negligence appeared to Edwin as absolutely monstrous. The effect of it on the street, the effect on a possible caller, was bad enough; but what was worse was the revelation of feminine mentality.

In opening the door with his latch-key he was purposely noisy, partly in order to give expression to his justified annoyance, and partly to warn all peccant women that the male had arrived, threatening.

As his feet stumbled into the interior gloom and he banged the door, he quite expected a rush of at least one apologetic woman with a box of matches. But nobody came. Nevertheless, he could hear sharp movements through the half-open door of the kitchen. Assuredly women had the irresponsibility of infants!

With unusual righteous care he wiped the half-congealed mud off his boots on the mat; then removed his hat and his overcoat, took a large new piece of indiarubber from his pocket and put it on the hall table, felt the radiator-which, despite all his injunctions and recommendations, was almost cold; and lastly he lighted the

gas himself.

This final act was contrary to his own rule, for he had often told Hilda that half her trouble with servants arose through her impatiently doing herself things which they had omitted, instead of ringing the bell and seeing the things done. But he was not infrequently inconsistent, both in deed and in thought. For another example, he would say superiorly that a woman could never manage women, ignoring that he, the all-wise, had never been able to manage Hilda.

He turned to go up-stairs. At the same moment somebody emerged obscurely from the kitchen. It was Hilda, in a white

"Oh! I'm glad you've lighted it," said she curtly, without the least symptom of apology, but rather affrontingly.

He continued his way.

"Have you seen anything of George?"

Her tone stopped him; yet she well knew that he hated to be stopped of an evening on his way to the bath-room.

"Of course I haven't seen George," he

answered.

"Because he's not back from school yet, and I can't help wondering-"

She was worrying about George as usual.

He grunted and passed on.

"There's no light on the landing either," he said, over the banisters. "I wish you'd see to those servants of yours."

"As it happens, there aren't any servants."

Her tone, getting more peculiar with each phrase, stopped him again.

"Aren't any servants? What d'you

"Well, I found the attic full of beerbottles, so I sent her off on the spot."

"Sent who off?"

" Eliza."

" And where's Ada?"

"She's gone, too," said Hilda defiantly, and as if rebutting an accusation before it could be made.

" Why?"

"She seemed to want to. And she was very impertinent over it."

He snorted and shrugged his shoulders. "Well, it's your affair," he muttered, too scornful to ask for details.

"It is," said she, laconically.

In the bath-room, vexed and gloomy, he mused savagely over the servant problem. The servant problem had been growing He had predicted several times that a crisis would arrive; a crisis had arrived. He had liked Ada; he had not disliked the cook. He knew that Hilda was to blame. How should she not be to blame, losing her entire domestic staff in an afternoon?

It was not merely that she lacked the gift of authoritative control-it was also that she had no feeling for democratic justice as between one human being and another. And yet among his earliest recollections of her was her passionate sympathy with men on strike as against their employers. Totally misleading manifesta-For her a servant was nothing but

Occasionally Edwin was quite outraged by her callousness. The topic of the eighthour day, of the ten-hour day, and even of the twelve-hour day-the last for tramway men - had been lately exciting the district. And Edwin was distressed that in his own house a sixteen-hour day for labor was in vogue, and that the employer perceived no shame in it. From six in the morning until ten at night these mysterious, light-headed young women were the They had no surcease slaves of a bell. except one long week-day evening each week and a short Sunday evening each

He remembered one cook whose family lived at the village of Brindley Edge, five miles off. This cook on her week-day evening would walk to Brindley Edge, spend three-quarters of an hour in her home, and walk back to Bursley, reaching Trafalgar Road just in time to get to bed. Hilda saw nothing very odd in that. She said the girl could always please herself about

going to Brindley Edge.

Edwin's democratic sense was gradually growing in force. He seldom displayed his sympathies, but they pursued their secret activity in his being, annoying him at his lithographic works, and still more in his home. He would suppress them, and grin, and repeat his ancient, consoling truth that what was, was. His relief, however, was not permanent.

In that year the discovery of Roentgen rays, the practical invention of the incandescent gas-mantle, the abolition of the man with the red flag in front of self-propelled vehicles, and the fact that consols stood at one hundred and thirteen, had combined to produce in innumerable hearts the illusion that civilization was advancing at a great rate. But Edwin in his soul scarcely thought so. He was worrying not only about liberal principles, but about the world. And of his own personal success he would ask and ask:

"Is it right?"

He said to himself in the bath-room:

"There are a million domestic servants in this blessed country, and not one of them works less than a hundred hours a week, and nobody cares. I don't think I really care myself. But there it is all the same!"

He was darkly resentful against Hilda on account of the entire phenomenon. Would there ever be any real tranquillity in his house, with that strange, primeval cave-woman in it?

As he descended the stairs, Hilda came out of the dining-room with an empty tray. "I wish you'd go out and look for

George" she said.

Imagine it — going out into the Five

Towns to look for one boy!

"Oh, he'll be all right. I suppose you haven't forgotten that Ingpen is coming to-night?"

"Of course I haven't; but I want you to go out and look for George."

He knew what was in her mind — an absurd vision of George and his new bicycle crushed under a tram-car somewhere between Bleakridge and Hanbridge. In that year everybody with any pretension to youthfulness and modernity rode a bicycle. Both Edwin and Hilda rode occasionally—such was the power of fashion.

He was about to declare that he would certainly not do anything so silly as to go out and look for George—and then, all of a sudden, he had the queer sensation of being alone with Hilda in the house made strange and romantic by a domestic calamity. He gazed at Hilda with her apron, and the calamity had made her strange and romantic also. He was vexed, annoyed, despondent, gloomy, fearful of the immediate future; he had immense grievances; he hated Hilda; he loathed giving way to her. He thought:

"What is it binds me to this incomprehensible woman? I will not be bound!"

But he felt that he would be compelled—not by her, but by something in himself—to commit the folly of going out to look for George.

"Oh, damn!" he exploded, and reached

for a cap.

And then George came into the hall through the kitchen. The boy often preferred to enter by the back, the stalking Indian way.

George wore spectacles. He had grown considerably. He was now between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and he had begun to look his age. He imposed himself even on his family as a genuine adolescent, though the idiom he employed was often schoolboyish, and his gestures were immaturely rough.

The fact was, he was not the same boy. Everybody noticed it. His old charm and delicacy seemed to have gone; and his voice was going. He held a very low opinion of all his schoolfellows, and did not conceal it. Yet he was not very high in his form—the lower fifth; his reports were mediocre; and he cut no figure in the playing-field. In the home he was charged with idleness, selfishness, and irresolution.

It was pointed out to him that he was not making the best of his gifts, and that if he only chose to make the best of them he might easily, et cetera, et cetera. Apparently he did not care a bit. He had marked facility on the piano, but he had insisted on giving up his piano lessons, and would not open the piano for a fortnight at a time. He still maintained his intention of being an architect, but he had ceased to show any interest in architecture. He would, however, paint in water-colors, and he read a lot, but gluttonously, without taste.

Edwin and Hilda, and especially Hilda, did not hide their discontent. Hilda had

outbursts against him.

"Oh, he'll grow out of it," Edwin would say to Hilda; yet Edwin, like Hilda, thought that the boy was deliberately naughty, and they held themselves toward him as grieved persons of superior righteousness toward a person of inferior righteousness.

Not even Edwin reflected that profound molecular changes might be proceeding in George's brain, for which changes he was in no way responsible. Nevertheless, despite the blighting disappointment of the boy's evolution, the home was by no means deeply engloomed. No! George had an appealing smile, a mere gawky boyishness, a peculiar way of existing, that somehow

made joy in the home.

In passing through the kitchen, George had, of course, been struck by the astounding absence of the cook. When he came into the hall, the strange aspect of his mother, wearing a servant's apron, and his uncle proved to him that something marvelously unusual, exciting, and uplifting was afoot. He was pleased, agog, and he had the additional satisfaction that great events would conveniently divert attention from his lateness. He slipped between Edwin and Hilda with a fairly good imitation of innocent casualness, as if saying:

"Whatever has occurred, I am guilt-

less, and going on just as usual."

"O-oh! Bags I!" he exclaimed loudly, at the hall table, and seized the india-rub-ber, which Edwin had promised him.

His school vocabulary comprised an extraordinary number of words ending in "gs." He would never, for example, say "first," but "foggs"; and never "second," but "seggs."

"George!" Hilda severely protested. Her anxiety concerning him was now turned into resentment. "Have you had an ac-

cident?"

"An accident?" said George, as if at a loss; yet he knew perfectly that his mother was referring to the bicycle.

Edwin said curtly:

"Now, don't play the fool. Have you fallen off your bike? Look at your overcoat. Don't leave that satchel there, and

hang your coat up properly."

The overcoat was in a grievous state. A few days earlier it had been new. Besides money, it had cost an enormous amount of deliberation and discussion, like everything else connected with George; but now it had no quality left but warmth. Efforts in regard to George were always thus out of proportion to the trifling results obtained.

George's face expressed a sense of in-

jury, and his face hardened.

"Mother made me take my overcoat. You know I can't cycle in my overcoat. I've not been on my bicycle all day. My lamp's broken," he said, with gloomy defiance.

His curiosity about wondrous events in the house was quenched.

Edwin felt angry with Hilda for having quite unjustifiably assumed that George had gone to school on his bicycle. All these

alarms for nothing!

"Then why are you so late?" Hilda demanded, diverting to George her indignation at Edwin's unuttered but yet conveyed criticism of herself.

" Kept in."

"What for?"
"Latin."

"Home work? Again?" ejaculated Edwin. "Why hadn't you done it properly?" "I had a headache last night. And I've

had one to-day."

"Another of your Latin headaches!" said Edwin sarcastically.

There was nothing, except possibly codliver oil, that George detested more than Edwin's serious sarcasm.

The elders glanced at each other, and glanced away. Both had the same fear—the dreadful fear that George might be developing the worst characteristics of his father. Both had vividly in mind the fact that this boy was the son of George Cannon. They never mentioned to each other either the fear or the fact; they dared not; but each knew the thoughts of the other.

The boy was undoubtedly crafty; he could conceal subtle designs under a simple exterior; he was also undoubtedly secretive. The recent changes in his disposition had put Edwin and Hilda on their guard, and every time young George displayed cunning, or economized the truth, or lied, the fear visited them.

Edwin now attacked the boy gloomily: "You didn't seem to have much of a headache when you came in just now."

It was true; but George suddenly burst into tears. His headaches were absolutely genuine. The emptiness of the kitchen and the general queer look of things in the house had, however, by their promise of adventurous happenings, caused him to forget his headache altogether, and the discovery of the new india-rubber had been like a tonic to a convalescent.

The menacing attitude of the elders brought about a relapse. The headache established itself as his chief physical sensation. His chief moral sensation was that of a terrible grievance. He did not often cry; indeed, he had not cried for about a year. But to-night there was

something nervous in the very air, and the sob took him unawares.

"It's my eyes," he blubbered. "I told you these specs would never suit me; but you wouldn't believe me, and the head-

master won't believe me!"

The discovery that George's eyesight was defective, about two months earlier, had led to a desperate but, of course, hopeless struggle on his part against the wearing of spectacles. It was curious that in the struggle he had never even mentioned his strongest objection to spectacles—the fact that Bert Benbow wore them.

"Why didn't you tell us?" Edwin de-

manded.

Between sobs George replied with overwhelming, disillusioned disgust:

"What's the good of telling you anything? You only think I'm codding."

And he passed up-stairs, apparently the broken victim of fate and parents, but in reality triumphant. His triumph was such that neither Edwin nor Hilda dared even to protest against the use of such an inexcusable word as "codding."

Hilda went into the kitchen, and Edwin rather aimlessly followed her. He felt incompetent. He could do nothing except carry trays, and he had no desire to carry

travs.

Neither spoke. Hilda, bending over the fire, arranged the grid in front of it to hold a tin. He thought she looked very wistful, for all the bitter sturdiness of her demeanor. He knew that she was blaming him on account of George. He knew that she believed in the sincerity of George's outburst; he believed in it himself. The spectacles were wrong; the headache was genuine. And he, Edwin, was guilty of the spectacles because he had forced Hilda, by his calm, bantering common sense, to consult a small local oculist of good reputation.

Hilda had wanted to go to Birmingham or Manchester; but Edwin said that such an idea was absurd. There could be nothing uniquely wrong with the boy's eyes; it was a temporary weakness. And so on and so on, in accordance with Edwin's instinct for denying the existence of a crisis.

Suddenly Hilda turned round upon her

husband.

"I shall take George to London to-morrow about his eyes," she said, with immense purpose and sincerity; in a kind of fierce challenge.

This was her amends to George for hav-

ing often disbelieved him, and for having suspected him of taking after his father. She made her amends passionately, and with all the force of her temperament.

"To London?" exclaimed Edwin weakly.

"Yes. It's no use half doing these things. I shall ask Charlie Orgreave to recommend me a first-class oculist."

Edwin dared say nothing. Either Manchester or Birmingham would have been just as good as London, perhaps better. Moreover, she had not even consulted him. She had decided by a violent impulse and announced her decision.

That was not right. She would have protested against a similar act by Edwin; but he could not argue with her. She was

far beyond argument.

"I wouldn't have that boy's eyesight played with for anything!" she said fiercely.

"Well, of course you wouldn't! Who would?" Edwin thought, but he did not

say it.

"Go and see what he's doing," she said. Edwin slouched off. He was no longer the master of the house. He was only an economic factor and general tool in the house. As he wandered like a culprit up the stairs of the mysteriously transformed dwelling, he began vaguely to perceive all that was involved in her threat to go to London on the morrow. He stiffened, and said to himself:

"We shall see about that. We shall just see about that!"

They were at the meal. Hilda had covered George's portion of fish with a plate and put it before the fire to keep warm. She was just returning to the table. Tertius Ingpen, who sat with his back to the fire, looked at her over his shoulder with an admiring smile, and said:

"Well, I've had some good meals in this house, but this is certainly the best bit of fish I've ever tasted. So that the catastrophe in the kitchen leaves me unmoved."

Hilda, with face suddenly transformed by a responsive smile, insinuated herself between the table and her armchair, drew forward the chair by its arms, and sat down. Her keen pleasure in the compliment was obvious. Edwin noted that the meal was really very well served, the table brighter than usual, the toast crisper, and the fish—a fine piece of hake, white as snow within its browned exterior—merely

perfect. There was no doubt that Hilda could be extremely efficient when she de-

He, too, felt pleasure in the compliment to Hilda; and he calmly enjoyed the spectacle of his wife and his friend side by side on such mutually appreciative terms. The intimacy of the illuminated table in the midst of the darker room, the warmth and crackling of the fire, the grave solidity of the furniture, and the delicate odors of the repast—all these things satisfied in him something that was profound.

"That's right," Hilda murmured, in her clear enunciation. "I do like praise!"

"Now, then, you callous brute!" said Ingpen to Edwin. "What do you say?" And Hilda cried with swift, complaining

sincerity:

"Oh, Edwin never praises me!"

Her sincerity convinced by its very artlessness.

"Yes, I do!" Edwin protested, and though he was shocked, he laughed, as Ingpen was laughing.

It was true. He did praise her; but not frequently, and almost always in order to flatter her rather than to express his own emotion. He was shocked as much by the girl's outrageous candor as by the indisputable revelation that she went hungry for praise. Even to a close friend, such as Ingpen, surely a wife had not the right to be quite so desperately sincere. Edwin considered that in the presence of a third person husband and wife should always, at any cost, maintain the convention of perfect conjugal amenity.

"He's too wrapped up in the works to think about praising his wife," Hilda continued, still in the disconcerting vein of sincerity, but with less violence and a more

philosophical air.

The fact was that, although she had not regained the zest of the mood so rudely dissipated by the scene with Ada, she was kept cheerful by the mere successful exercise of her own energy in proving to these two men that servants were not in the least essential to the continuance of plenary comfort in her house; and she somewhat condescended toward Edwin.

"By the way, Teddie," said Ingpen, pulling lightly at his short beard, "I heard a rumor that you were going to stand for the town council in the South Ward. Why

didn't you?"

Edwin looked a little confused.

"Who told you that tale?"

"It was about."

"It never came from me," said Edwin.
"He was invited to stand," Hilda broke
in eagerly; "but he wouldn't. I thought
he ought to. I begged him to; but no, he
wouldn't! And did you know he refused
a magistracy too?"

"Oh!" mumbled Edwin. "That sort of

thing's not my line."

"Oh, isn't it?" Ingpen exclaimed.
"Then whose line is it?"

"Look at all the rotters in the council!" said Edwin.

"All the more reason why you should be on it."

"Well, I've got no time," Edwin fin-

ished gloomily and uneasily.

Ingpen paused, tapping his teeth with his finger, before proceeding, in a judicial, thoughtful manner which in recent years

he had been developing:

"I'll tell you what's the matter with you, old man. You don't know it, but you're in a groove. You go about like a shuttle from the house to the works and the works to the house. And you never think beyond the works and the house."

"Oh, don't I?"

Ingpen went placidly on:

"No, you don't. You've become a good specimen of the genus 'domesticated business man.' You've forgotten what life is. I suppose you'll never see forty againand have you ever been outside this island? You went to Llandudno this year because you went last year; and you'll go next year because you went this year. If you happen now and then to worry about the failure of your confounded Liberal party, you think you're a blooming broad-minded publicist. Where are your musical evenings? When I asked you to go with me to a concert at Manchester last week but one, you thought I'd gone dotty, simply because it meant your leaving the works early and not getting to bed until the unheard-of time of 1.30 A.M."

"I was never told anything about any concert," Hilda interjected sharply.

"Go on! Go on!" said Edwin, raising

his eyebrows.

"I will," said Ingpen with tranquillity, as if discussing impartially and impersonally the conduct of some individual at the Antipodes. "Where am I? Well, you're always buying books, and I believe you reckon yourself a bit of a reader. What

d'you get out of them? I dare say you've got decided views on the transcendent question whether Emily Brontë was a greater writer than Charlotte. That's about what you've got. Why, dash it, you haven't a vice left! A vice would interfere with your lovely litho. There's only one thing that would upset you more than a machinery breakdown at the works-'

"And what's that?"

"What's that? If one of the hinges of your garden gate came off, or you lost your latch-key. Why, just look how you've evidently been struck all of a heap by this servant affair! I expect it occurred to you your breakfast might be five minutes late in the morning.'

"Stuff!" said Edwin mildly. He regarded Ingpen's observations as fantastically unjust and beside the mark; but his sense of fairness and his admiration of the man's intellectual honesty would not allow him to resent them. "Struck

all of a heap, indeed!" he muttered. "Wasn't he, Hilda?"

"I should just say he was! And I know he thinks it's all my fault," said Hilda.

Tertius Ingpen glanced at her for an instant, and gave a short, half-cynical laugh, which scarcely concealed his mild scorn of her feminine confusion of the

argument.

"It's the usual thing!" said Ingpen, with scorn still more marked. At this stage of a dissertation he was inclined to be less a human being than the trumpet of a " It's the usual thing! I sacred message. never knew a happy marriage yet that didn't end in the same way."

Then, perceiving that he was growing too earnest, and that his emphasis on the phrase "happy marriage" had possibly been too sarcastic, he snickered.

"I really don't see what marriage has to do with it," said Hilda, frowning.

"No, of course you don't," Ingpen

"If you said business-" she added. "Now we've had the diagnosis," Edwin sardonically remarked, looking at his plate, "what's the prescription?" He was reflecting: "Happy marriage, does he call it? Why on earth does she say I think it's all her fault? I've not breathed a word."

"Well," replied Ingpen, "you live too . close to your infernal works. Why don't you get away, right away, and live out in the country, like a sensible man, instead

of sticking in this filthy hole-among all these new cottages? Barbarian hordes!"

"Oh! Hurrah!" cried Hilda. "At last I've got somebody who takes my side!"

"Of course, you say it's impossible. You naturally would," Ingpen resumed.

He was interrupted by the entrance of George. Soon after Tertius Ingpen's arrival, George had been despatched to summon urgently Mrs. Tams, the charwoman, who had already more than once helped to fill a hiatus between two cooks. George showed now no trace of his late martyrdom, nor of a headache. To conquer George in these latter days you had to demand of him a service.

As he had already greeted Ingpen, he was able to go without ceremony straight to his chair. Confidentially, in the silence, Hilda raised her eyebrows to him interrogatively. In reply he gave one short nod. Thus in two scarcely perceptible gestures the assurance was asked for and given that the mission had been successful, and that Mrs. Tams would be coming up at once. George loved these private and laconic signalings.

He glanced at his empty place; whereupon Hilda glanced informingly in the direction of the fire, and George, skilled in the interpretation of minute signs, skirted stealthily round the table behind his mother's chair, and snatched his loaded plate from the hearth.

"Furnace all right again, sonny?" asked Edwin quietly, when the boy had sat down.

Hilda was replenishing Ingpen's plate. "Blop!" muttered George, springing up aghast:

This meant that he had forgotten the furnace in the cellar, source of heat to the radiator in the hall. By a recent arrangement he received sixpence a week for stoking the furnace.

"Never mind! It 'll do afterward," said Edwin.

But George, masticating fish, shook his head. He must be stern with himselfpossibly to atone for his tears; and he went off instantly to the cellar.

Both Edwin and Hilda dwelt in secret upon his boyish charm, and affectionate satisfaction mingled with and softened their apprehensions and their brooding responsibility and remorse. They thought: "He is simply exquisite," and in their hearts apologized to him.

Tertius Ingpen asked suddenly:

"What's happened to the young man's

spectacles?"

"They don't suit him," said Hilda eagerly. "They don't suit him at all. They give him headaches. Edwin would have me take him to the local man—what's his name?—at Hanbridge. I was afraid it would be risky, but Edwin would have it. I'm going to take him to London to-morrow. He's been having headaches for some time, and never said a word."

"Surely," Ingpen smiled, "it's contrary to George's usual practise to hide his

troubles like that, isn't it?"

"Oh, he's rather secretive, you know," said Hilda.

Edwin, secretly agitated, said in a curious light tone:

"If you ask me, he kept it quiet just to pay us out."

"Pay you out? What for?"

"For making him wear spectacles at all. These kids want a deuce of a lot of understanding; but that's my contribution. He simply said to himself: 'Well, if they think they're going to cure my eyesight with their beastly spectacles, they just aren't, and I won't tell 'em!'"

"Edwin!" Hilda protested warmly.

Tertius Ingpen went off into one of his peculiar long fits of laughter; and Edwin quizzically smiled, feeling as if he was repaying Hilda for her unnecessary insistence upon the fact that he was responsible for the choosing of a merely local oculist.

Hilda, suspecting that the two men saw something droll which was hidden from her, blushed and then laughed in turn,

somewhat self-consciously.

"Don't you think it's best to go to London, about an affair like eyesight?" she

asked Ingpen pointedly.

"The chief thing in these cases," said Ingpen solemnly, "is to satisfy the maternal instinct. Who are you going to?"

"You are horrid!" Hilda exclaimed, and added: "I shall ask Charlie Orgreave. He'll tell me the best man."

"You seem to have a great belief in

Charlie," said Ingpen.

While they were talking about Charlie and about Janet, who was now living with her brother at Ealing, the sounds of George stoking the furnace below came dully up through the floor-boards.

"If you and George are going away," said Ingpen, "what 'll happen to his worship, with not a servant in the house?"

This important point had been occupying Edwin's mind ever since Hilda had first announced her intention to go to London. It had, for him, only an academic interest, since he was determined that she should not go to London to-morrow. Nevertheless, he waited anxiously for the reply.

Hilda answered with composure: "I'm hoping he'll come with us."

He had been prepared for anything but this. The proposition was monstrously impossible. Could a man leave his works at a moment's notice?

"That's quite out of the question," he

said at once.

He was absolutely sincere. The effect of Ingpen's discourse was, however, such as to upset the assured dignity of his pronouncement; for the decision was simply an illustration of Ingpen's theory concerning him. He blushed.

"Why is it out of the question?" demanded Hilda, inimically gazing at him.

She had lost her lenient attitude of the afternoon. Nevertheless, reflecting upon Tertius Ingpen's indictment of the usual happy marriage, she had been planning the expedition to London as a wonderful revival in their lives. She saw it as a marvelous rejuvenating experience. She wanted passionately to break the mysterious bonds that held them both back from ecstasy and romance; and he would not help her.

"I can't," said Edwin. "What d'you want to go to-morrow for? What does a

day or two matter?"

Then she loosed her tongue. Why tomorrow? Because you couldn't triile with a child's eyesight. Already the thing had been dragging on for goodness knew how long. They could shut the house up, and go off together, and stay at Charlie's. Hadn't Janet asked them many a time? Maggie would look out for new servants. And Mrs. Tams would clean the house.

"And there's another thing," she went on without a pause, speaking rapidly and clearly. "Your eyes want seeing to as

well "

"Mine!" he exclaimed. "My eyes are

as right as rain."

"Then why have you had a double candle-bracket fixed at your bed-head, when a single one's been enough for you all these years?" she demanded.

"I just thought of it, that's all," said Edwin glumly, and with no attempt to be diplomatic. "Anyhow, I can't go to London to-morrow."

"Then what shall you do while I'm

away?" she asked implacably.

But if she was implacable, he also could be implacable. Tertius Ingpen was witness of a plain breach between them. It was unfortunate; it was wholly Hilda's fault; but he had to face the fact.

"I don't know," he replied curtly.
The next moment George returned.
"Hasn't Mrs. Tams been quick mother?" said George. "She's come."

In the drawing - room, after the meal, Edwin could hear, through the half-open door, the sounds of conversation between Hilda and Mrs. Tams, with an occasional word from George, who was going to help Mrs. Tams to "put the things away" after

she had washed and wiped.

Mrs. Tams's voice was very gentle and comforting. Edwin's indignant pity went out to her. Why should she thus cheerfully bear the misfortunes of others? Why should she at a moment's notice leave a cottageful of young children and a husband liable at any time to get drunk and maim either them or her, in order to meet a crisis caused by Hilda's impulsiveness and lack of tact?

The answer, as in so many cases, was, of course, economic. Mrs. Tams could not afford not to be at Mrs. Clayhanger's instant call; also she was born the victim of her own altruism. But could anything excuse those who took advantage of such an economic system and such a devoted Edwin's conscience uneasily nature? stirred; he could have blushed. However, he was helpless; and he was basely glad that he was helpless, that it was no affair of his after all, and that Mrs. Tams had thus to work out her destiny to his own benefit.

"I alone in this house feel the real significance of Mrs. Tams. I'm sure she doesn't feel it herself," he thought; but these reflections were only the vague, unimportant background to the great matter in his mind—the difficulty with Hilda.

Tertius Ingpen, having as usual opened the piano, was idly diverting himself with strange chords. Like Edwin, Ingpen was a little self-conscious after the open trouble in the dining-room; but in addition to being self-conscious, Ingpen was also triumphant. There was a peculiar sardonic and somewhat disdainful look on his face as he mused over the chords, trying to keep the cigarette-smoke out of his eyes.

His oblique glance seemed to be saying

to Edwin:

"What have I always told you about women? Well, you've married, and you must take the consequences. Your wife's no worse than other wives. Here am I, free! And wouldn't you like to be in my

place, my boy?"

Edwin resented these unspoken observations. The contrast between Ingpen's specious support and flattery of Hilda when she was present, and his sardonic glance when she was absent, was altogether too marked. Himself in revolt against the institution of marriage, Edwin could not bear that Ingpen should attack it.

"Why London—and why to-morrow?" said Edwin, cheerfully, with a superior, philosophical air, as if impartially studying an argumentative position, as if he could regard the temporary vagaries of an otherwise fine, sensible woman with bland detachment. He said it because he was obliged to say something, in order to prove that he was neither a slave nor a dupe.

"Ask me another," replied Ingpen

curtly.

"Well, we shall see," said Edwin mys-

teriously, firmly, and loftily.

He had decided to have a grand altercation with his wife that night, when Ingpen and Mrs. Tams had departed, and George was asleep, and they had the house to themselves. He felt no doubt as to the result. The news of his triumph should reach Ingpen.

Ingpen was apparently about to take up the conversation when George came clumsily and noisily into the drawing-room. All his charm seemed to have left him.

"I thought you were going to help,"

said Edwin.
"So I am," George challenged him; and,

lacking the courage to stop at that point, added: "But they aren't ready yet."

"Let's try those Haydn bits George"

"Let's try those Haydn bits, George," Ingpen suggested.

"Oh, no!" said George curtly.

Ingpen and the boy had begun to play easy fragments of duets together.

"Sit down to that piano and do as Mr. Ingpen asks you," Edwin said sternly.

George flushed, looked foolish, and sat down; and Ingpen quizzed him. All three knew well that Edwin's fierceness was only one among sundry consequences of the

mood of the house-mistress.

The slow movement and the scherzo from the symphony were played. While the music went on, Edwin heard distantly the opening and shutting of the front door and an arrival in the hall, and chattering. Maggie had called.

"What's she after?" thought Edwin.

"Hoo! There's Aunty Maggie!" George exclaimed, as soon as the *scherzo* was finished, and ran off.

"That boy is really musical," said Ing-

pen with conviction.

"Yes, I suppose he is," Edwin agreed casually. "But you'd never guess he'd got

a bad headache, would you?"

It was a strange kind of social evening, and Hilda—it seemed to the august Edwin—had a strange notion of the duties of hostess. Surely, if Mrs. Tams was in the kitchen, Hilda ought to be in the drawing-room with their guest! Surely Maggie ought to have been brought into the drawing-room!

He could hear chatterings from the dining-room, scurryings through the hall, and chatterings from the kitchen; then a smash of crockery, a slight scream, and girlish gigglings. They were all the same, all the women he knew, except perhaps Clara. They had hours when they seemed to forget that they were adults and that

their skirts were long.

But how was it that Hilda and Maggie were so suddenly intimate? The whole ground floor was full of the rumor of an apparent alliance between Hilda and

Maggie.

As he listened, Edwin glanced sternly at the columns of the *Signal*, while Tertius Ingpen, absorbed, worked his way bravely through a sonata of Beethoven. Then George reappeared.

"Mother's going to take me to London to-morrow, about my eyes," said George to Ingpen, stopping the sonata by his mere sense of the importance of such tidings.

Edwin did not move. He kept an admirable and complete calm under the blow. Hilda had decided, then, to defy him. In telling the boy, who during the meal had been permitted to learn nothing, she had burned her boats; she had even burned Edwin's boats also. That seemed to be contrary to the rules laid down by society for conjugal warfare; but women never could fight according to rules!

The chattering, giggling girls entered the drawing-room. As Maggie came through the doorway, her face stiffened; her eyes took on a glaze; and when Ingpen bent over her hand in all the false ardor of his excessive, conventional chivalry, the spinster's terrible constraint—scourge of all her social existence—gripped her like a disease.

"Hello, Mag!" Edwin greeted her.

Impossible to divine in this plump, dowdy, fading, dumb creature the participator in all those chatterings and gigglings of a few moments earlier!

"Aunty Hamps is being naughty again,"

said Hilda bluntly.

Ingpen, and then Edwin, snickered.

"I can't do anything with her, Edwin," said Maggie, speaking quickly and eagerly, as she and Hilda sat down. "She's bound to let herself in for another attack if she doesn't take care of herself. And she won't take care of herself. I've got her to bed early to-night—she's frightfully shaky—and I thought I'd come up and tell you. You're the only one that can do anything with her at all, and you really must come and see her to-morrow on your way to the works."

"All right! All right!" said he, with amiable impatience. It was the first he had heard of the matter. "I'll drop in. But I've got no influence over her," he

added with sincerity.

"Oh, yes, you have!" said Maggie, mildly now. "I'm very sorry to hear about George's eyes. Seeing it's absolutely necessary for Hilda to take him to London to-morrow, and you've got no servants at all, can't you come and sleep at aunty's for a night or two? You've no idea what a relief it would be to me."

In an instant Edwin saw that he was beaten, that Hilda and Maggie, in the intervals of their giggling, had combined

to overthrow him.

"I think you might, dear," said Hilda, with the angelic persuasiveness of a loving

and submissive wife.

Nobody could have guessed, from that marvelous tone, that she had been determined to defeat him and was then, so to speak, standing over his prostrate form.

Edwin sat alone in the drawing-room, at the end of an evening which he declined to call an evening at all. His eyes regarded a book on his knee, but he was not reading it. His mind was engaged upon the enigma of his existence.

He had entered his house without the least apprehension, and bruskly, in a few hours, everything seemed to be changed for him. Impulse had conquered common sense; his ejectment was a settled thing; and he was condemned to the hated abode of Aunty Hamps.

Events seemed enormous. The responsibilities connected with George were increasing; his wife was getting out of hand; and the menace of a future removal to another home in the country was raised

again.

He looked about the room; and he imagined all the house, every object in which was familiar and beloved. He simply could not bear to think of the disintegration of these interiors by furniture-removers, and of the endless, rasping business of creating a new home in partnership with a woman whose ideas about furnishing were as unsound as they were capricious.

He dismissed the fanciful scheme, as he dismissed the urgings toward public activity. He deeply resented all these headstrong intentions to disturb him in his tranquillity. He would die in sullen ob-

stinacy rather than yield!

Ingpen had departed, to sleep in a room in the same building as his office at Hanbridge. Edwin knew that Ingpen had no comprehension of domestic comfort and a well-disposed day. Nevertheless, he envied the man his celestial freedom. If he, Edwin, were free, what an ideal life he could make for himself—a life presided over by common sense, regularity, and order! He was not free; he never would be free; and what had he obtained in exchange for freedom?

Ingpen's immense criticism smote him. He had a wife and her child; servants—at intervals; a fine works and many workpeople; a house, with books; money; security. And what was the result? Was he ever, in any ideal sense, happy? Was any quarter of an hour of his day absolutely what he would have wished? He ranged over his day, and concluded that the best part of it was the very last.

He got into bed, the candles in the sconce were lit, the gas diminished to a blue speck, and most of the room in darkness; he lay down on his left side, took the marker from the volume in his hand, and began to read; the house was silent and enclosed; it was in another world; over the edge of his book he could see the form of his wife, fast asleep in the other bed, her hair trailing over the pillow; the feel of the sheets to his limbs was exquisite; he read, the book was good; the chill of winter just pleasantly affected the hand that held the book; nothing annoyed; nothing jarred; sleep approached.

That fifteen minutes, that twenty or thirty minutes, was all that he could show as the result of the tremendous, organized machinery of his existence—his house, his works, his work - people, his servants, his

wife with her child.

Hilda came with quick determination

into the drawing-room.

"I'm going to bed now, dear," said she, in an ordinary tone. "I've got a frightful headache, and I must sleep. Be sure and wake me up at seven in the morning, will you?"

She bent down and kissed him several times, very fervently; her lips lingered on his. And all the time she frowned ever so little; and it was as if she was conveying

to him:

"But — each for himself in marriage, after all!"

In spite of himself, he felt just a little relieved; and he could not understand why. He watched her as she left the room. How had it come about that the still finally mysterious creature was living in his house, imposing her individuality upon him, spoiling his existence?

He rose, lit a cigarette and opened the window; and the frosty air, entering, braced him and summoned his self-reliance. The night was wondrous.

When he had shut the window and turned again within, the room, beautiful, withdrawn, peaceful, was wondrous too. And then his grievance against Hilda slowly surged up, and he began for the first time to realize how vast it was.

"Confound that woman!" he muttered,

meaning Aunty Hamps.

# CHAPTER XVIII

### AUNTY HAMPS SENTENCED

On the next evening it was Maggie who opened Mrs. Hamps's front door for Edwin. There was no light in the lobby, but a faint gleam coming through the open

door of the sitting-room disclosed the silhouette of Maggie's broad figure.

"I thought you'd call in this morning," said Maggie discontentedly. "I asked you to. I've been expecting you all day."

"Didn't you get my message?"

" No-what message?"

"D'you mean to say a lad hasn't been here with my portmanteau?" demanded Edwin, alarmed and ready to be annoyed. "Yes, a lad's been here with your port-

manteau; but he gave me no message." "I told him to tell you I couldn't pos-

sibly get here before night."

"Well, he didn't!" said Maggie stoutly, throwing back the blame upon Edwin and his hirelings. "I particularly wanted you to come early. I told aunty you'd be coming."

"How's she getting on?" Edwin asked with laconic gruffness, dismissing Maggie's

grievance without an apology.

"She's worse," said Maggie, briefly and

significantly.

"In bed?" said Edwin, less casually, marking her tone.

Maggie nodded. " Had the doctor?"

"I should think so, indeed!"

"H-m! Why don't you have a light in this lobby?" he inquired suddenly, on a dryly humorous note, as he groped to suspend his overcoat upon an unstable hatstand. It seemed to be a very cold lobby, after his own radiator-heated hall.

"She never will have a light here, unless she's doing the grand for some one. Are

you going to wash your hands?"

"No, I cleaned up at the works." presentiment of the damp chilliness of the Hamps bedroom had suggested this precaution.

Maggie preceded him into the sittingroom, where a hexagonal occasional-table

was laid for tea.

"Hello! Do you eat here? What's the matter with the dining-room?"

"The chimney always smokes when the wind's in the southwest."

"Well, why doesn't she have a cowl put on it?"

"You'd better ask her. Also she likes to save a fire. I'll bring tea in. It's all ready."

Maggie went away.

Edwin looked round the shabby Victorian room. A length of featureless linoleum led from the door to the table. This

carpet - protecting linoleum exasperated · him. It expressed the very spirit of his aunt's house. He glanced at the pictures, the texts, the beady and woolly embroideries, the harsh chairs, and the magnificent morocco exteriors of the photograph-albums in which Aunty Hamps kept the shiny portraits of all her relatives, from grandnieces back to the third and fourth generation of ancestors.

A feeling of desolation came over him. He had almost forgotten what the house really was like; and, suddenly thrown back into it at its most lugubrious and ignoble, after years of the amenities of Trafalgar Road, he was somehow surprised that that sort of thing had continued to

exist.

He cautiously lifted the table and carried it to the hearth-rug. Then he sat down in the easy chair, whose special property, as he remembered, was slowly and inevitably to slide the occupier forward to the hard edge of the seat; and he put his feet inside the fender. In the grate a small fire burned feebly between two fire-bricks. He sneezed.

Maggie came in with a tray.

"No coal here, I suppose!" he exclaimed gloomily, opening the black-japanned coal-

scuttle. "Oh, corn in Egypt!"

The scuttle was full of coal. He threw on the fire several profuse shovelfuls of best household nut, which had cost sixteen shillings a ton even in that district of cheap coal.

"Well," Maggie murmured, "it's a good thing it's you!"

"What on earth does she do with her money?" he muttered.

Shrugging her shoulders, Maggie went out again with an empty tray.

"No servant, either?" Edwin asked, when she returned.

"She's sitting with aunty."

"Must I go up before I have my tea?" "No. She won't have heard you come."

There was a grilled mutton-chop and a boiled egg on the crowded, small table, with tea, bread and butter, two rounds of dry toast, some cakes, and jam.

"Which are you having-egg or chop?" Edwin demanded as Maggie sat down.

"Oh, they're both for you."

" And what about you?"

"I only have bread and butter, as a

Edwin grunted, and began to eat.

"What's supposed to be the matter with

her?" he inquired.

"It seems it's congestion of the lungs, and thickened arteries. It wouldn't matter so much about the lungs being congested, in itself; only it's the strain on her heart."

"I see. Been in bed all day, I suppose?"

"No, she would get up; but she had to go back to bed at once. She had a collapse."

" H-m!"

He could not think of anything else to say.

"Haven't got to-night's Signal, have

you?"

"Oh, no!" said Maggie, astonished at such a strange demand. "Hilda get off all right?"

"Yes, they went by the nine train."

"She told me that she would, if she could manage it. I expect Mrs. Tams was up there early."

Edwin nodded, recalling with bitterness certain moments of the early morning.

And then silence ensued.

He felt sorry for Maggie, and also kindly disdainful of her. He glanced at her furtively, and tried to see in her the girl of the past. She had grown immensely older than himself. She was now at home in the dreadful Hamps environment.

True, she had an income, but had she any pleasures? First his father, then himself, and lastly Aunty Hamps had subjugated her. And yet, Edwin felt, even Aunty Hamps had not quite succeeded. The original individual still survived in Maggie, and was silently critical of all the phenomena which surrounded her and to which she had apparently submitted.

Toward the end of the meal a heavy foot was heard on the stairs.

"Minniel" Mannie stairs.

"Minnie!" Maggie called.

After shuffling and hesitation the sittingroom door was pushed ever so little open. "Yes, miss," said some one feebly.

"Why have you left Mrs. Hamps? Do you need anything?"

"Missis made me go, miss," came the reply, very loosely articulated.

"Come in and take your bread," said Maggie, and aside to Edwin: "Aunty's

at it again!"

After another hesitation the door opened wide, and Minnie became visible. She was rather a big girl, quite young, fat, too fair, undecided, obviously always between two minds. Her large apron, badly fitting

over the blue frock, was of a dubious yellow color. She wore spectacles. Behind her spectacles she seemed to be blinking in confusion at all the subtle complexities of existence.

"Here's your bread," said Maggie, indicating the two rounds of dry bread. "I've left the dripping on the kitchen table

for you."

"Thank ye, miss."

He noticed that the veiled voice was

that of a deaf person.

Blushing, Minnie took the bread, and moved away. Just as she reached the door, she gave a great sob, followed by a number of little ones; and the bread fell on the carpet. She left it there, and vanished, still violently sobbing.

Edwin, spellbound, stopped masticating. A momentary sensation almost of horror seized him. Maggie turned pale.

"What next?" muttered Maggie, intimidated but plucky, rising and following Minnie. "Just go up to aunty, will you?" she called to Edwin over her shoulder. "She oughtn't to be left alone."

Edwin pushed open the door and crept with precautions into the bedroom. Mrs. Hamps was dozing. In the half light of the lowered gas he looked at her and was alarmed, shocked, for it was at once apparent that she must be very ill.

She lay reclining against several crumpled and crushed pillows, with her head on one side and her veined hands limp on the eider-down, between the heavy brown side-curtains that hung from the carved mahogany tester. Aunty Hamps had ceased to be a Wesleyan, a pillar of society, a champion of the conventions, and a keeper-up of appearances; she was just an utterly wearied and beaten creature, breathing noisily through her wide-open mouth. Edwin had the sudden dreadful thought:

"She is done for, sentenced, cut off from the rest of us. This is the end of her. She won't be able to pretend any more. All her efforts have come to this!"

At once contemptible and august, she was diminished, even in size. Her scanty gray hair was tousled. Her pink-flannel night-dress, with its long, loose sleeves, was grotesque; the multitude of her patched outer wrappings, from which peeped her head on its withered neck, and safety-pins, and the orifice of a hot-water bottle, were equally grotesque.

None of the bed-linen was clean or of good quality. The eider-down was old, and the needle points of its small, white feathers were piercing it. The table at the bed-head had a strange collection of poor, odd crockery. The whole room, with its distempered walls of an uncomfortable green color, in spite of several respectable pieces of mahogany furniture, seemed to be the secret retreat of a graceless and mean indigence. Above all, it was damply cold; the window stood a little open, and only the tiniest fire burned in the inefficient grate.

For decades Aunty Hamps, with her erect figure and handsome face, her black silks, jet ornaments, and sealskins, her small, regular subscriptions and her spasmodic splendors of golden generosity, her heroic, relentless hypocrisies and her absolute self-reliance and independence, had exhibited a glorious front to the world. With her, person and individuality were almost everything, and the environment she had made for herself almost nothing.

The ground floor of her house was presentable, especially when titivated for occasional hospitalities, but not more than presentable. The upper floor was never shown. Her bedroom was guarded like a fastness. In it, unbeheld, lived the other Aunty Hamps, complementary to the grand and massive Mrs. Hamps known to mankind. And now the fastness was exposed, defenseless, and its squalid, avaricious secrets discovered; and she was too broken to protest.

Her pose was pitiful and her face was pitiful. Those features were still far from ugly; the contours of the flushed cheeks, the chin, and the convex eyelids were astonishingly soft, and recalled the young girl of about half a century earlier. The

reflection was inevitable:

"She was a young girl-and now she is

sentenced."

Edwin felt himself desolated by a terrible sense of gloom which questioned the justification of all life. The cold of the room made him shiver. After gazing for a long time at the sufferer, he silently tiptoed to the fire.

On the painted iron mantelpiece stood a basalt clock and three photographs—a recent photograph of smirking Clara surrounded by her brood; a faded photograph of Maggie as a young girl, intolerably dowdy; and an equally faded photograph of himself as a young man of twenty. Above the clock was suspended by a ribbon a new green card, lettered in silver with some verses entitled "Lean Hard." This card, he knew, had superseded a booklet of similar tenor that used to lie on the dressing-table when he was an infant. The verses began:

Child of my love, lean hard, And let Me feel the pressure of thy care.

And they ended:

Thou lovest Me. I knew it. Doubt not then, But loving Me, LEAN HARD.

All his life he had laughed at the notion of his aunty leaning hard upon anything whatever. Yet she had lived continually with these verses ever since the year of their first publication; she had never tired of their message. And now Edwin was touched. He seemed to see some sincerity, some beauty, in them. He thought:

"Did aunty only pretend to believe in them. Or did she think she did believe in them? Or did she really believe in them?"

The last seemed a possibility. Supposing she did really believe in them? Yes, he was touched.

Then he stooped to put some bits of coal

silently on the fire.

"Who's that putting coal on the fire?" said a faint but sharply protesting voice from the bed.

The weakness of the voice gave Edwin a fresh shock. The voice seemed to be drawing on the very last reserves of its owner's vitality. Owing to the height of the foot of the bed, Aunty Hamps could not see anything at the fireplace lower than the mantelpiece. As she withdrew from earth, she employed her fading faculties to expostulate against a waste of coal and to identify the unseen criminal. "I am" said Edwin cheerfully. "It

"I am," said Edwin cheerfully. "It

was nearly out."

He stood up, smiling slightly, and faced her. Aunty Hamps, lifting her head and frowning in surprise, gazed at him for a few moments, as if trying to decide who he was.

"Eh, Edwin! I never heard you come in. This is an honor!" And her head

dropped back.

"I'm sleeping here," said Edwin, with determined cheerfulness. "Did you know?"

She reflected for a moment, and then answered deliberately, using her volition to articulate every syllable:

"Yes. Ye're having Maggie's room."

"Oh, no, aunty!

"Yes, you are. I've told her." The faint voice became harshly obstinate. "Turn the gas up a bit, Edwin, so that I can see you."

He raised the gas. Aunty Hamps

blinked.

"You want something to shade this gas," said Edwin. "I'll fix ye something."

The gas-bracket was a little to the right of the fireplace, over the dressing-table, and nearly opposite the bed. Hamps nodded. Having glanced about, Edwin put a bonnet-box on the dressingtable, and on that, upright and open, the Hamps family Bible from the ottoman.

"That 'll be better," said he. "You're not at all well, I hear, aunty." He en-

deavored to be tactful.

She slowly shook her head as it lay on

"This is one of my bad days; but I shall pick up. Has Hilda taken George to London?"

Edwin nodded.

"Eh, I do hope and pray it 'll be all right! I've had such good eyesight myself, I'm all the more afraid for others. What a blessing it's been to me! Eh, what a good mother dear Hilda is!" She added after a pause: "I dare say there never was such a mother as Hilda, unless it's Clara."

"Has Clara been in to-day?" Edwin demanded, to change the subject of con-

"No, she hasn't; but she will, as soon as she has a moment. She'll be popping in. They're such a tie on her, those children are-and how she looks after them! Edwin!"

"Yes?"

The frail voice continued articulating with great carefulness, and achieving each sentence as if it were a miracle, as indeed

" I think no one ever had such nephews and nieces as I have. I've never had children of my own-that was not to be!but I must say the Lord has made it up to me in my nieces and nephews. You and Hilda-and Clara and Albert-and the little chicks!" Tears stood in her eyes.

"You're forgetting Maggie," said Ed-

win lightly.

"Yes," Aunty Hamps agreed, but in a quite different tone, reluctant and critical. I'm sure Maggie does her best. Oh, I'm sure she does. Edwin!" Again she called

He approached the tumbled bed, and even sat on the edge of it, his hands in Aunty Hamps, though his pockets. breathing now more rapidly and with more difficulty, seemed to have revitalized herself at some mysterious source of energy.

"Do you want anything?" Edwin suggested, indicating the contents of the night-

She feebly moved her head to signify a

negative.

"I'm so relieved you've come," she said at length, slowly and painfully. "I've really no one but you. It's about that girl."

"What girl?"

" Minnie."

"The servant?"

Mrs. Hamps inclined her head, and fetched breath through the wide - open

"I've only just found it out. She's in trouble! Oh, she admitted it to me a bit ago. I sent her down-stairs. I wouldn't have her in my bedroom a minute longer. She's in trouble. I felt sure she was. She was at class-meeting last Wednesday, and only yesterday I paid her her wages. Only vesterday! Here she lives on the fat of the land, and what does she do for it? I assure you I have to see to everything myself. I'm always after her. In a month she won't be fit to be seen. Edwin, I've never been so ashamed. That I should have to tell such a thing to my own nephew!"

She ceased, exhausted. Edwin was somewhat amused. He could not help feeling amused at such an accident happening in the house of Mrs. Hamps.

"Who's the man?" he asked.

"Yes, and that's another thing!" answered Mrs. Hamps, solemnly, in her extreme weakness. "It's the barman at the Sun Vaults, of all people. She wouldn't admit it, but I know."

"What are you going to do?"

"She must leave my house at once."

"Where does she live - I mean her

"She has no parents." Aunty Hamps reflected for a few moments. "She has an aunt at Axe."

"Does Maggie know about it?"

" Maggie!" exclaimed Mrs. Hamps scornfully. "Maggie never notices anything." She added in a graver tone: " And there's no reason why Maggie should know. It's not the sort of thing that Maggie ought to know about. You can speak to the girl herself. It will come much better from you. I shall simply tell Maggie I've decided the girl must go.'

"She can't go to Axe to-night," Edwin

said, humoringly, but firmly.

"Well," Aunty Hamps murmured, "tomorrow morning, then. She can turn the dining-room out, and clean the silver in the black box, and then she can go-before dinner. I don't see why I should give her her dinner, nor her extra day's wages either."

"And what shall you do for a servant?

Get a charwoman?"

"Charwoman? No! Maggie will manage." Then, with a sudden flare of relished violence: "I always knew that girl was a mopsy slut. And what's more, if you ask me, she brought him into the house-and after eleven o'clock at night, too!"

Her eyelids dropped. Having looked back for an instant in a supreme effort on behalf of the conventions upon which society was established, Aunty Hamps turned again, exhausted, toward the lifting

veil of the unknown.

"I say," Edwin began, when he had silently closed the door of the sitting-room, "here's a lark, if you like!"

He gave a short laugh. It was under such language and such demeanor that he

concealed his real emotion.

Maggie looked up gloomily. With a bit of pencil in her heavy fingers, she was totting up the figures of household accounts in a red-covered cash-book.

Edwin went on:

"It seems the girl yon "-he indicated the kitchen with a jerk of the head-" has been and got herself into a mess."

"Has she been talking to you about it?"

" Yes."

"I suppose she's only just found out?" "Who? Aunty? Yes. Did you know

about it?"

"Did I know about it?" Maggie repeated with mild, disdainful impatience. "Of course, I knew about it. I've known for weeks; but I wasn't going to tell her," she finished bitterly.

Edwin regarded his sister with new respect and not without astonishment. Never before in their lives had they discussed any inconvenient sexual phenomenon. Maggie was not at all tongue-tied; she was at her ease. She had become a woman of the world.

"She was for turning her out to-night,"

said Edwin. "I stopped that." "I should think so, indeed!"

"I've got her as far as to-morrow morning."

"The girl won't go to-morrow either!" said Maggie. "At least, if she goes, I go." She spoke with tranquillity, adding: "But we needn't bother about that. Aunty will be past worrying about Minnie tomorrow morning. I'd better go up to her. She can't possibly be left alone."

" I only came down for a sec to tell you. She was dozing," said Edwin apologetical-"She's awfully ill. I'd no idea.

Who'll sit up with her?"

" I shall."

"We ought to get a nurse."

"Well, we can't get one to-night."

"What about Clara? Can't she take a turn? Surely in a case like this she can chuck her eternal kids for a bit."

"I expect she could; but she doesn't know."

He ex-

"Haven't you sent around?"

pressed surprise. "I couldn't," said Maggie with undisturbed equanimity. "Who could I send? I couldn't spare Minnie. The thing didn't seem at all serious until this morning. Since then I've had my hands full. It was lucky the doctor called on his own. He does sometimes, you know, since she began to have attacks.'

"Well, I'll go round to Clara's myself,"

said Edwin.

"I shouldn't," said Maggie. "At least, not to-night."

"Why not?"

He might have put the question angrily, overbearingly; but Maggie was so friendly, suave, confidential, persuasive, and so sure of herself, that with pleasure he copied her accents. He enjoyed thus talking with her intimately in the ugly, dark house, with the life-bearing, foolish Minnie on the one hand, and the dying old woman on the

"I'd sooner not have her here to-night," said Maggie. "You knew they'd had a tremendous rumpus, didn't you?"

"Who-aunty and Clara?"

" Yes."

"I didn't. What about? When?"

"Oh, it must have been two or three months ago. Aunty said something about Albert not paying me interest on my money he's got. And then Clara flared up, and the fat was in the fire."

"D'you mean to say he's not paying you your interest? Why didn't you tell

me before?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter. I didn't want

to bother you."

"Well, you ought to have bothered me," said Edwin, with a trace of benevolent severity.

He was astounded, and somewhat hurt, that this great family event should have been successfully concealed from him.

"Did Hilda know?"
"Oh, yes, Hilda knew."

"Well, I'm dashed! But I suppose this row isn't going to stop Clara from coming here, seeing the state aunty's in."

"No, certainly not. Clara would come like a shot if she knew, and Albert as well. She's a good nurse—in some ways."

"Well, if they aren't told, and anything happens to aunty in the night, there'll be a fine to-do afterward—don't forget that!"

"Nothing 'll happen to aunty in the night," said Maggie, with tranquil reassurance. "And I don't think I could stand 'em to-night."

She had moved foot by foot anxiously to the door, and had only been kept in the room by the imperative urgency of the conversation. She now had her hand on the door.

"I say!" He held her yet another moment. "What's this about me taking your room? I don't want to turn you out of

vour room."

"That's all right," said she, with a kind smile. "It's easiest, really. Moreover, I dare say there won't be such a lot of

sleeping."

Maggie opened the door. She had scarcely stepped forth when Minnie, from the kitchen, rushed into the lobby and dropped, intentionally or unintentionally, on her knees before her. Edwin, unobserved by Minnie, witnessed the scene through the doorway.

Minnie, agitated almost to the point of hysteria, was crying violently. As she breathed, her shoulders lifted and fell, and the sound of her sobbing rose periodically to a shriek and sank to a groan. She knelt with her body and thighs upright and her head erect, making no attempt to stem the tears or to hide her face.

To Edwin she seemed excessively young, and yet far too large and too developed for her age. The girl was obviously a fool. Edwin could perceive in her no charm whatever, except that of her innocence; and it was not easy to imagine that any man, even the barman of the Sun Vaults, could have mistaken her, even momentarily, for the ideal.

And then some glance from her spectacled eyes, or some gesture of the great red hand, showed him his own blindness, and mysteriously made him realize the immensity of the illusion and the disillusion through which she had passed in her foolish and incontinent simplicity. Already, in her girlishness and stupidity, she had lived through supreme hours.

"Compared to her," he thought, "I don't know what life is. No man does."

He not only suffered for her sorrow, he gave her a sacred quality. And although he had never seen the silly girl before, he said to himself, while noticing that a crumb or two of the bread dropped by her still remained on the floor:

"I'll see that girl through, whatever it

costs!"

He was not indignant against Aunty Hamps. How could he be indignant against an expiring old creature already desperate in the final dilemma? He was indignant against destiny, of which Aunty Hamps was only the miserable, unimaginative instrument.

"I'd better go to-night, miss. Let me

go to-night!" cried Minnie.

She cried so loudly that Edwin was afraid Aunty Hamps might hear, and might make an apparition at the head of the stairs and curse Minnie with fearful biblical names.

"Minnie! Minnie! Don't be foolish!" said Maggie, standing over her and soothing her, not with her hands, but with her

voice.

Her tone was exactly right. It reminded Edwin of the tone which she would use to himself when she was sixteen and the house-keeper, and he was twelve. Maggie had long since lost authority over him; she had lost everything; she would die without having lived; she had never begun to live—no, perhaps once she had just begun to

live. Minnie had prime knowledge far exceeding hers; and yet she had power over Minnie and could exercise it with skill.

Minnie, hesitating, sobbed more slowly,

and then ceased to sob.

"Go back into the kitchen and have something to eat, and then you can go to bed. You'll feel differently in the morning," said Maggie with the same gentle blandness.

And Minnie, as if fascinated, rose from

her knees.

Edwin, surmising what had passed between the two in the kitchen while he was in the bedroom, was aware of a fresh and intense admiration for Maggie. She might be dowdy, narrow, dull, obstinate, virgin, but she was superb!

In the middle of the night Edwin kept watch over Aunty Hamps, who was asleep. He sat in a rocking-chair, with his back to the window and the right side of his

face to the glow of the fire.

The fire was as effective as the size and form of the grate would allow; it burned richly red; but its influence did not seem to extend beyond a radius of four feet outward from its center. A thermometer which he had found, and which lay on the night-table, five yards from the fire, registered only fifty-two degrees. His expelled breath showed in the air. It was as if he were fighting with all resources against frigidity

and barely holding his own.

In the half light of the gas, still screened from the bed by the bonnet-box and the Bible, he glanced round amid the dark shadows at the mean and sinister ugliness of the historic chamber, the secret nest and withdrawing-place of Aunty Hamps; and the real asceticism of her life, and of the life of all her generation, almost smote him. Half a century earlier such a room represented comfort; in some details—as, for instance, in its bed—it represented luxury; and in half a century Aunty Hamps had learned nothing from the material progress of civilization but the use of the hot-water bottle.

He rocked gently to and fro in the chair, excited by events and by the novel situation, and he was not dissatisfied with himself. Indeed, he was aware of a certain calm complacency, for his common sense had triumphed over Maggie's devoted, silly womanishness. Maggie was for sitting up throughout the night; she was anxious to

wear herself out for no reason whatever; but he had sent her to bed until three o'clock, promising to call her if she should be needed.

He got up from the chair and looked at the bed. He heard no unusual sound therefrom, but to excuse his restlessness he had said:

"Suppose some change has occurred,

and I didn't notice it!"

No change had occurred. Aunty Hamps lay like a mite, like a baby forlorn, senile, and defenseless, amid the heaped pillows and coverings of the bed. Within the deep gloom of the canopy and the overarching curtains, only her small, soft face was alive; even her hair was hidden in the indentation made by the weight of her head in the pillows. She was unconscious, either in sleep or otherwise, he could not tell how. And in her unconsciousness the losing but obstinate fight against the power which was dragging her over the edge of eternity still went on.

A tremendous pity for her reentered his heart because she was so beaten, and so fallen from the gorgeousness of her splendor. Even Minnie could have imposed her will upon Aunty Hamps now; each hour-

she weakened.

He had no more resentment against her on account of Minnie, no accusation to formulate. He knew that she was cruel only because she was incapable of imagining what it was to be Minnie. He understood. She worshiped God under the form of respectability, but she did worship God.

Like all religious votaries, she placed religion above morality; hence her chicane, her inveterate deceit and self-deceit. It was with a religious aim that she had concealed from him the estrangement between herself and Clara. The unity of the family was one of her major canons—as indeed it was one of Edwin's. She had a passion for her nephew and nieces. It was a grand passion. Her pride in them must have been as terrific as her longing that they and all theirs should conform to the sole ideal that she comprehended.

Undeniably there was something magnificent in her religion, in her unscrupulousness in the practise of it, and in the mighty consistency of her career. She had lived. He ceased to pity her, for she towered above pity. She was dying, but only for an instant. He would smile at his aunt's primeval notions of a future life, yet he had to admit that his own notions, though far less precise, could not be appreciably less crude. He and she were anyhow at one in the profound and staggering conviction of immortality.

Enlightened by that conviction, he was able to reduce the physical and mental tragedy of the death-bed to its right proportions as a transiency between the heroic past and the inconceivable future.

He returned to the rocking-chair.

"She's asleep now in some room I've never seen!" he reflected.

He was suddenly thinking of his wife. During the previous night, lying sleepless close to her while she slept soundly, he had reflected long and with increasing pessimism. The solace of Hilda's kiss had proved fleeting. She had not realized—he himself was then only realizing little by little—the enormity of the thing she had done.

What she had deliberately and obstinately done was to turn him out of his No injury that she might have chosen could have touched him more closely, more painfully, for his house to him was sacred. Her blundering with the servants might be condoned, but what excuse was it possible to find for this precipitate flight to London, involving the summary ejectment from the home of him who had created the home and for and by whom the home chiefly existed? The argument that George's eyes - of whose condition she had learned by mere hazard -could not wait until domestic affairs were arranged, was too grotesque to deserve an answer.

And, lying thus close to his wife in the dark, he had perceived that the conflict between his individuality and hers could never cease. No diplomatic devices of manner could put an end to it.

He had seen, also, that as they both grew older and developed more fully, the conflict was becoming more serious. He assumed that he had faults, but he was solemnly convinced that the faults of Hilda were tremendous, essential, and ineradicable. She had a faculty for acting contrary to justice and contrary to sense which was simply monstrous. And it had always been so. Her whole life had been made up of impulsiveness and contumacy in that impulsiveness. Witness the incredible scenes of the strange Dartmoor episode—all due to her stubborn irrationality!

The perspective of his marriage was

plain to him in the night, and it ended in a rupture. As the minutes and hours passed in grim meditation, the more attractive grew the lost freedom of the bachelor, and the more ready he felt to face any ordeal that lay between him and it. And, just as it was occurring to him that his proper course was to have had a terrific, open, decisive battle with her in front of both Maggie and Ingpen, he had fallen asleep.

Upon awaking, barely in time to arouse Hilda, he knew that the mood of the night had not melted away, as such moods are apt to melt. It was even intensified.

Hilda had divined nothing. She never did divine the tortures which she inflicted in his heart. She did not possess the gumption to divine. Her demeanor had been amazing. She averred that she had not slept at all. Instead of cajoling, she bullied. Instead of tacitly admitting that she was infamously wronging him, she had assumed a grievance of her own—without stating it. Once she had said discontentedly about some trifle: "You might at any rate"—as though the victim should caress the executioner.

She had kissed him at departure, but not as usual effusively, and he had suffered the kiss in enmity. Edwin, solitary, had been forced to perform the final symbolic act—that of locking him out of his own sacred home.

All day, at the works, his bitterness and melancholy had been terrible. Before evening he had decided to write to his wife from Aunty Hamps's—a letter cold, unanswerable, crushing, that would confront her unescapably with the alternatives of complete submission or complete separation. The phrases of the letter came into his mind. He would see who was master.

He had been full of the letter when he entered Aunty Hamps's lobby; but the strange tone in which Maggie had answered his questions about the sick woman had thrust the letter and the crisis right to the back of his mind, where they had uneasily remained throughout the evening.

And now in the rocking-chair he was reflecting:

"She's asleep in some room I've never seen!"

He smiled—such a smile, candid, generous, and affectionate, as was Hilda's joy, such a smile as Hilda dwelt on in memory when she was alone. The mood of resent-

ment passed away. He saw everything differently. He saw that he had been entirely wrong in his estimate of the situation and of Hilda.

Hilda was a mother. She had the protective passion of maternity. She was carried away by her passions; but her passions were noble, marvelous, unique. He himself could never-he thought, humbled attain to her emotional heights. He was incapable of feeling about anything or any-

body as she felt about George.

The revelation concerning George's eyesight had shocked her, overwhelmed her with remorse, driven every other idea out of her head. She must atone to George instantly; instantly she must take measures - the most drastic and certain - to secure him from the threatened danger. She could not count the cost till afterward.

"Eh, dear! What a good mother dear Hilda is!" Mrs. Hamps had said.

A sentimental outcry! But there was profound truth in it-truth which the old woman had seen better than he had seen it.

"I dare say there never was such a mother—unless it's Clara!"

Hyperbole! And yet he himself now began to think that there never could have been such a mother as Hilda.

Clara, too, in her way was wonderful. Smile as you might, these mothers were tremendous. The mysterious sheen of their narrow and deep lives dazzled him.

But Hilda was far beyond Clara. She was not only a mother, but a lover. Would he cut himself off from her loving? Why? For what? To live alone in the arid and futile freedom of a Tertius Ingpen? Such a notion was fatuous.

Where lay the difficulty between himself and Hilda? There was no difficulty. How had she harmed him? She had not harmed him. Everything was all right. He had only to understand. He understood.

As for her impulsiveness, her wrongheadedness, her bizarre ratiocination-he knew how to accept them, for was he not a philosopher? He admitted that Hilda in some respects transcended him, but in others he was comfortably aware of his own steady, conquering superiority. He thought of her with the most exquisite devotion. He pictured the secret tenderness of their reunion amid the conventional gloom of Aunty Hamps's death-bed.

He was confident of his ability to manage Hilda, at any rate in the big things-

for example, the disputed points of his entry into public activity and their removal from Trafalgar Road into the country. At the same time the thought of the dark mood from which he had emerged obscurely perturbed him, like a fearful danger passed; and he argued to himself with satisfaction, and yet not quite with conviction, that he had yielded to Maggie, and not to Hilda, in the affair of the journey to London, and that therefore his marital dignity was intact.

And then he started at a strange sound below, which somehow recalled him to the nervous tension of the house. It was a knocking at the front door. He jumped up, and glanced at the bed. Aunty Hamps had not wakened.

## CHAPTER XIX

### DEATH AND BURIAL

ALBERT BENBOW was at the front door. Edwin curbed the expression of astonish-

"Hello, Albert!"

"Oh, you aren't gone to bed?"

"Not likely. Come in! What's up?" Albert seemed excited. Edwin feared that he had just learned of Aunty Hamps's illness, and had come in the middle of the night ostensibly to make inquiries, but really to make a grievance of the fact that the Benbows had been "kept in ignorance."

Edwin shut the door, and shut out the dark and windy glimpse of the outer world which had emphasized for a moment the

tense seclusion of the house.

"You've heard, of course, about the accident to Ingpen?" said Albert.

His hands were deep in his overcoat-pockets; the collar of his thin, rather shabby overcoat was turned up; an old cap adhered to the back of his head.

"No, I haven't," said Edwin, with false calmness. "What accident?"

The perspective of events seemed to change; Aunty Hamps's illness to recede, and a definite and familiar apprehension to be supplanted by a fear more formidable because it was a fear of the unknown.

"It was all in the late special Signal!" Benbow protested, as if his pride had been

"Well, I haven't seen the Signal. What is it?" Edwin thought: " Is somebody else dying, too?"

"Fly-wheel broke. Ingpen was inspecting the slip-house next to the engine-house. Part of the fly-wheel came through and knocked a loose nut off the plunger right into his groin."

"Whose works?"

"Mine," Albert answered in a light tone.

"And how's he getting on?"

"Well, he's had an operation, and Sterling's got the nut out. Of course, they didn't know what it was till they got it out. And now Ingpen wants to see you at once. That's why I've come."

"Where is he?"

"At the Clowes Hospital."
"Is he going on all right?"

"He's very weak. He can scarcely whisper; but he wants you. I've been up

there all the time practically."

Edwin seized his overcoat from the rack.
"I had a rare job finding ye," Benbow
went on. "I'd no idea you weren't all at
home. I wakened most of Hulton Street
over it. It was the Smiths, next door,
came out at last and told me missis and
George had gone to London and you were
over here."

"I wonder who told them!" Edwin mumbled, as Albert helped him with his overcoat. "I must tell Maggie. We've

got some illness here, you know."

" Oh?"

"Yes—aunty. Very sudden. Seemed to get worse to-night. Fact is, I was sitting up while Maggie got a bit of sleep. She was going to send round for Clara in the morning. I'll just run up to Mag."

Having thus by judicious misrepresentation deprived the Benbows of a grievance, Edwin moved toward the stairs. Maggie, fully dressed, already stood at the top of them, alert, anxious, adequate.

"Albert, is that you?"

After a few seconds of quick, murmured explanation, Edwin and Albert departed. As they went, Maggie, in a voice doubly harassed but cheerful, called out after them how glad she would be, and what a help it would be, if Clara could come round early in the morning.

The small Clowes Hospital was high up in the town, opposite the park, near the station and the railway cutting, and not far from the Moorthorne Ridge. Behind its bushes, through which the wet nightwind swished and rustled, it looked still very new and red in the fitful moonlight. And indeed it was scarcely older than the park and the swimming-baths close by, and Bursley had not yet lost its naive pride in the possession of a hospital of its own.

Albert Benbow led Edwin round through an aisle of bushes to the side entrance for out-patients. He pushed open a dark door, walked into a gas-lit vestibule, and with the assured gestures of a proprietor invited Edwin to follow.

A fat woman who looked like a charwoman made tidy sat in a Windsor chair in the vestibule, close to a radiator. She signed to Albert, as an old acquaintance, to go forward, and Albert nodded in the manner of one conspirator to another.

Edwin had the sensation of moving in a strange, nocturnal world—a world which had always coexisted with his own, but of which he had been till then most curiously

ignorant.

At the top of the naked stairs, which came after a dark corridor, was a long, naked, resounding passage lighted by a tiny jet at either end. A cough from behind a half-open door came echoing out and filled the night and the passage. Then, at another door, appeared a tall, thin, fair nurse in blue and white, with thin lips and a slight smile, hard and disdainful.

"Here's Mr. Clayhanger, nurse!" mut-

tered Albert Benbow.

Edwin imagined that he knew by sight everybody in the town above a certain social level, but he had no memory of the face of the nurse.

"How is he?" he asked awkwardly, fin-

gering his hat.

The girl merely raised her eyebrows.
"You mustn't stay," said she, in a mincing but rather loud voice that matched her lips.

"Oh, no, I won't!"

"I suppose *I'd* better stop cutside," said Benbow.

Edwin followed the nurse into a darkened room, of which the chief article of furniture appeared to be a screen. Behind the screen was a bed, and on the bed, in the deep obscurity, lay a form under creaseless bedclothes. Edwin first recognized Ingpen's beard, then his visage, very pale and solemn, and without the customary spectacles.

Of the whole body only the eyes moved. As Edwin approached the bed, he cast across Ingpen a shadow from the distant

gas.

"Well, old chap!" he began with con-

straint. "This is a nice state of affairs! How are you getting on?"

Ingpen's inquiring, apprehensive, dumb glance silenced the clumsy greeting.

"Water!" he whispered. The nurse shook her head.

"Not yet," she replied with tepid in-

Ingpen's eyes remained on her a moment and then went back to Edwin.

" Ed!" he whispered.

Edwin bent over the bed.

"Ed." Ingpen recommenced, speaking very deliberately, "go to my office. the top drawer of the desk in the bedroom there's some photos and letters. them-before morning. Understand?"

Edwin was profoundly stirred. In his emotion were pride at Ingpen's trust, astonishment at the sudden, utterly unexpected revelation, and the thrill of romance.

"The man is dying!" he thought; and the tragic sensation of the vigil of the nocturnal world almost overcame him.

"Yes," he said. "Anything else?"
No."

"What about keys?"

Ingpen gave him another long glance.

" Trousers."

"Where are his clothes?" Edwin asked the nurse, whose lips were ironic.

"They'll tell you down-stairs. You'd

better go now."

As he went from the room, it seemed monstrous that he should abandon Ingpen for the rest of the night, defenseless, to the cold tyranny of the nurse.

"Isn't he allowed to drink?" he could

not help murmuring at the door.

"Yes-at intervals."

He wanted to chastise the nurse. He imagined an endless succession of sufferers under her appalling, inimical nonchalance. Who had allowed her to be a nurse?

Then he thought of Hilda's passionate, succoring tenderness when he himself was unwell-he had not been really ill for years. What was happening to Ingpen could never happen to him, because Hilda stood everlastingly between him and such a horror. He considered that a bachelor was the most pathetic creature on the earth.

" How do you think he is?" asked Albert. "Don't know," Edwin replied. "Look here, I've got to get hold of his clothes-

down-stairs." "Oh, that's it, is it? Pocketbook! Keys! Eh?"

Edwin had once been in Tertius Ingpen's office at the bottom of Crown Square, Hanbridge, but never in the bedroom that Ingpen rented on the top floor of the same building. It had been for seventy or eighty years a building of five squat stories; but a new landlord, seeing the architectural development of the town as a local metropolis, and determined to join in it at a minimum of expense, had knocked the two lower stories into one, fronted them with fawncolored terra-cotta, and produced a lofty shop whose rent exceeded the previous rent of the entire house.

The shop was in the occupation of a teadealer who gave away beautiful objects such as vases, and useful objects such as tea-trays, to all purchasers. Ingpen's office and a solicitor's office were on the first floor, formerly the second; the third floor was the headquarters of the Hanbridge and District Ethical Society; the top floor was temporarily unlet, save for Ingpen's room. Nobody but Ingpen slept in the building, and he very irregularly.

Edwin entered it somewhat furtively, and as it were guiltily, though in Crown Square and the streets visible therefrom not a soul could be seen. The illuminated clock of the Old Town Hall at the top of the square showed twenty-five minutes to

Immediately within the door began a new, very long, and rather mean staircase, with which Edwin was acquainted. He closed the door, shutting out the light and the town, and struck a match in the empty building. He had walked into Hanbridge from Bursley, and as soon as he began to climb the stairs he was aware of great fatigue, both physical and mental. calamity to Ingpen had almost driven Aunty Hamps out of his mind; it had not, however, driven Minnie out of his mind.

Each footstep sounded loud on the boards of the deserted house. Having used several matches, and arrived at the final staircase, Edwin wondered how he was to distinguish Ingpen's room there from the others without trying keys in all of them till he got to the right one. But on the top landing he had no difficulty, for Ingpen's card was fastened with a drawingpin to the first door he saw.

A match burned his fingers and expired, just as he was shaking out a likely key from Ingpen's bunch. Then, in the black darkness, he perceived a line of light under

the door in front of which he stood. His heart leaped. With precautions, and feeling very desperate and yet also craven, he lit a fresh match and managed quietly to open the door, which was not locked.

As soon as he beheld the illuminated interior of the room, all his skin crept and flushed as if he had taken a powerful stimulant. A girl reclined, asleep, in a small basket lounge-chair by the gas fire.

He could not see her face, which was turned toward the wall and away from the gas-jet that hung from the ceiling over an old desk; but she seemed slim and graceful, and there was something in the abandonment of unconsciousness that made her marvelously alluring. Her hat and her gloves had been thrown on the desk, and a cloak lay on a chair. These colored and intimate objects had the effect of delightfully completing the furniture of a room which was in fact rather bare.

A narrow bed in the far corner, disguised under a green rug as a sofa; a green square of carpet, showing the unpolished boards at the sides; the desk and three chairs; a primitive hanging wardrobe in another corner, hidden by a bulging linen curtain; a portmanteau; a few unframed prints on the walls; an alarm-clock on the mantelpiece—there was nothing else in the chamber where Ingpen slept when it was too late, or he was too slack, to go to his proper home; but nothing else was needed. The scene was perfect; the girl rendered it so.

An immense envy and admiration of Ingpen surged through Edwin, who saw here the realization of a dream that was to marriage what poetry is to prose. Ingpen might rail against women and against marriage in a manner exaggerated and indefensible; but he had at any rate known how to arrange his life, and how to keep his own counsel. He had all the careless masculine freedom of his condition-and in the background this exquisite phenomenon! girl, her trustfulness, her abandonment, her secrecy, that white ear peeping out of her hair-were his! It was staggering that such romance could exist in the Five Towns, of all places.

"Was it because he was expecting her that he sent me?" Edwin thought. "Perhaps the desk was only a blind-and he couldn't tell me any more. Anyhow, I shall have to break it to her."

As he went forward timidly, hat in hand,

into the room, the girl stirred and woke up, to the creaking of the chair.

"Oh! Tert!" she murmured between

sleeping and waking.

Edwin did not like her voice. It reminded him of the voice of the nurse whom he had just left.

Looking round, she perceived that it was not Tertius Ingpen who had come in. She gave a short, faint scream, then gathered herself together and with a single movement stood up, perfectly collected and on the defensive.

"It's all right! It's all right!" said Edwin. "Mr. Ingpen gave me his keys and asked me to come over and get some papers he wants. I hope I didn't frighten you. I'd no idea-"

She was old! She was old! That is to say, she was not the girl he had seen asleep. Before his marriage he would have put her age at thirty-two, but now he knew enough to be sure that she must be more than that. She was not graceful in movement. The expression on her pale face was not agreeable. Her gestures were not distinguished. She could not act her part in the idyl.

He thought, disdainfully, and as if resenting a deception:

" Is this the best he can do?"

" I called to see Mr. Ingpen," the woman said, with a silly, nervous giggle. "He wasn't expecting me. And I suppose while I was waiting I must have dropped off to sleep."

It might have been true, but to Edwin it was inexpressibly inane. She seized her hat and then her cloak.

"I'm sorry to say Mr. Ingpen's had an accident," said Edwin.

She stopped, both hands above her head fingering her hat.

An accident? Nothing serious?" "Oh, no! I don't think so," he lied. " A machinery accident. They had to take him to the Clowes Hospital at Bursley. I've just come from there."

She asked one or two more questions, all the time hurrying her preparations to leave; but Edwin judged with disgust that she was not deeply interested in the accident. True, he had minimized it, but she ought not to have allowed him to minimize it. She ought to have obstinately believed that it was very grave.

"I do hope he'll soon be all right," she said, snatching at her gloves and going to the door. "Good night!" She gave another silly giggle, preposterous in a woman of her age. Then she stopped. "I think you're gentleman enough not to say anything about me being here," she said rather "It was quite an accident. I could easily explain it, but you know what people are.'

What a phrase-" I think you're gentleman enough "! He blushed and offered the

required assurance.

'Can I let you out?" he started forward. " Please don't trouble yourself," she said

dryly.

He heard her footsteps diminuendo down the stairs. Where had she gone? Where did she come from? Her accent had no noticeable peculiarity. Was she married, or single, or a widow? Perhaps there was hidden in her some strange and seductive quality which he had missed. He saw the slim girl again reclining in the basket-chair.

Later, seated in front of the open drawer in the old desk, gathering together letters and photographs - photographs of her in adroitly managed poses, taken at Oldham; letters in a woman's hand-he was penetrated to the marrow by the disastrous and

yet beautiful infelicity of things.

By the will of Tertius Ingpen, helpless on the bed in the hospital, these documents of a passion or of a fancy were to be burned. Why? Was it true that Ingpen was dying? Better to keep them. No, they must be burned. He rose, and, with difficulty, burned them by instalments in a shovel over the tiny fender that enclosed the gas-The room was soon half full of stove. smoke.

His eye caught a print on the wall above the bed, a classic example of the sentimentality of Marcus Stone-departing cavalier, drooping maiden, terraced garden. It was a dreadful indictment of the Tertius Ingpen who talked so well, with such intellectual aplomb, with such detachment and exceptional cynicism. It was like a ray exposing some secret, sinister corner in the man's soul. He had hung up that print because it gave him pleasure! Poor chap!

But Edwin loved him. He decided that he would call again at the hospital before returning to Aunty Hamps's. Impossible that the man was dying! If the doctor or the matron had thought that he was in danger they would have summoned his

relatives.

Edwin put out the gas-stove, which exploded, lit a match, gave a great yawn, put out the gas, and began the enterprise of leaving the house.

"Look here! I must have some tea, now!" said Edwin, curtly and yet appealingly, to Maggie, who opened the door for

him at Aunty Hamps's.

It was nearly eight o'clock. He had been to the hospital again, and, having reported in three words to Ingpen, whose condition was unchanged, had remained there some time; but he had said nothing to Ingpen about the woman. At six o'clock the matron had come into the room. Edwin knew the matron, who was sympathetic but strangely pessimistic, considering her healthy, full figure.

"The water's boiling," answered Maggie, in a comforting tone, and disappeared

instantly into the kitchen.

With simple and surpassing wisdom she had just said to herself:

"He's been out all night, and he's not used to it." For a moment he felt that Maggie was

wiser and more intimately close to him than anybody else in the world.

"In the dining-room," she called out

from the kitchen.

And in the small dining-room there was a fire! It was like a living, welcoming creature. The cloth was laid, the gas was lighted. On the table were beautiful fresh bread and butter. A word, a tone, a glance of his on the previous evening had been enough to bring back the dining-room into use! Happily the wind suited the chimney.

He had scarcely sat down in front of the fire when Maggie entered with the teapot. And at the sight of the teapot Edwin

felt that he was saved.

"What will you have to eat?" asked Maggie.

"Nothing. I couldn't eat to save my

"Perhaps you'll have a bit of bread and butter later," said Maggie blandly.

He shook his head.

"How is she?"

"Worse," said Maggie. " But she's slept."

Who's up with her now-Minnie?"

" No, Clara."

"Oh, she's come!"

" She came at seven."

Edwin was drinking the divine tea. After a few gulps he told Maggie briefly about Tertius Ingpen, saying that he had had to go "on business" for Ingpen to Hanbridge.

"Are you all right for the present?" she

asked after a few moments.

He nodded. He was eating bread and butter.

"You had any sleep at all?" he mumbled, munching.

"Oh, yes! A little," she answered cheer-

fully, leaving the room.

He poured out more tea, and then sat down in the sole easy chair for a minute's reflection before going up-stairs and thence to the works.

Not until he woke up did he realize that there had been any danger of his going to sleep. The earthenware clock on the mantelpiece—a birthday gift from Clara and Albert—showed five minutes past eleven.

The fire was very low.

He got up hurriedly, and had reached the door when the sound of a voice on the stairs held him still like an enchantment. It seemed to be the voice, eloquent, and indeed somewhat Church - of - England, of the Rev. Christian Flowerdew, the new superintendent of the Bursley Wesleyan Methodist Circuit.

"I do hope so!" the voice said, and then offered a resounding remark about the weather—that, bad as it was, people must expect it in view of the time of year.

As soon as the front door closed Edwin peeped cautiously out of the dining-room.

"Who was that?" he murmured.

"Mr. Flowerdew. She wanted him."

Maggie came into the room and shut the

"I've been asleep," said Edwin.

"Yes, I know. I wasn't going to have you disturbed. They're all here."

"Who are all here?"

"Clara and the children. Aunty asked to see all of them. They waited in the drawing-room for Mr. Flowerdew to go. Bert didn't go to school this morning, in case — because it was so far off. Clara fetched the others out of school, except Rupy, of course—he doesn't go."

"Good Heavens! I never came across such a morbid lot in my life. I believe

they like it."

Clara could be heard marshaling the brood up-stairs.

"You'd better go up," said Maggie persuasively.

"I'd better go to the works—I'm no use here. What time is it?" "After eleven o'clock. I think you'd better go up."

"Has she asked for me?"

"Oh, yes!"

When Edwin nervously pushed open the bedroom door the room seemed to be crowded. Over the heads of clustering children towered Clara and Albert. As soon as the watchful Albert caught sight of Edwin, he made a conspiratorial sign and hurried to the door, driving Edwin out again.

"Didn't know you were here," Edwin

muttered.

"I say," Albert whispered, "has she made a will?"

"I don't know."

The bedroom door half opened, and Clara in her shabby morning dress glidingly joined them.

"He doesn't know," said Albert to Clara. Clara's pretty face scowled a little as she asked, sharply and resentfully:

"Don't you think you'd better ask her? Albert thinks you ought."

"No, I don't," said Edwin with curt

"Well, then, I shall," Albert decided.

"So long as you don't do it while I'm there!" Edwin said menacingly. "If you want to ask people about their wills, you ought to ask them before they're actually dying. Can't you see you can't worry her about her will now?"

He was intensely disgusted. He thought of Mrs. Hamps's bed, and of Tertius Ingpen's bed, and of the woman at dead of night in Ingpen's room, and of Minnie's case; and the base insensibility of Albert and Clara made him feel sick.

"There's nothing more to be said," Clara murmured.

In the glance of both Clara and Albert Edwin saw hatred and envy. Clara, especially, had never forgiven him for preventing their father from pouring money into that sieve, her husband, nor for Hilda's wounding tongue, nor for his worldly success. And they both suspected that either Maggie or Aunty Hamps had told him of Albert's default in the payment of interest, and so fear was added to their hatred and envy.

They all entered the bedroom, the children having been left alone only a few seconds. Rupert, wearing a new blue overcoat with gilt buttons, had partially scrambled onto the bed. The pale, veined hands of Aunty Hamps could be seen round his right hand. Rupert had grown enormous, and had already utterly forgotten the time when he was two years old.

The others, equally altered, stood two on either side of the bed-Bert and young Clara to the right, and Amy and Lucy to the left. Lucy was crying and Amy was benignantly wiping her eyes. Bert, a great lump of a boy, was to leave school at Christmas, but he was still ranked with the other children as a child.

"Oh, here's Uncle Edwin!"

" Edwin!"

"Yes, aunty!"

The moral values of the room were instantly changed by the tone in which Aunty Hamps had murmured "Edwin." All the Benbows knew, and Edwin himself knew, that a personage of supreme importance in Aunty Hamps's eyes had come into the scene.

Edwin approached, and over the heads of the children, and between the great, darkening curtains, he could at last see the face of the dying woman, like a senile doll's face amid the confusion of wrappings and bedclothes. The deep-set eyes seemed to burn beneath the white forehead and sparse gray hair; the cheeks, still rounded, were highly flushed over a very small part of their surface; the mouth, always open, was drawn in; the chin, still rounded like the cheeks, protruded. The manner of Aunty Hamps's noisy breathing, like the puzzled gaze of her eyes, indicated apprehension of the profoundest, acutest sort.

"Eh!" said she, in a somewhat falsetto voice, jerky and excessively feeble.

thought—I'd—lost you."
"No, no," said Edwin, leaning over between young Clara and Rupert.

"She's feeling for your hand, Edwin,"

He quickly took her hot, brittle fingers; they seemed to cling to his for essential

"Have you-been to the works?" Aunty Hamps asked the question as if the answer to it would end all trouble.

"No," he said. "Not yet."
"Eh! That's right! That's right!" she murmured, apparently much impressed by a new proof of Edwin's wisdom.

" I've had a sleep."

" What?"

"I've just been having a sleep," he repeated more loudly.

"Eh! That's right! That's right! I'm

so glad. The children have been to see me. Amy, did you kiss me?"

Aunty Hamps looked at Amy hard, as it were for the first time.

"Yes, aunty."

And then Amy began to cry.

"Better take them away," Edwin suggested aside to Albert.

Albert, obedient, gave the word of command, and the room was full of movement.

"Eh, children, children!" Aunty Hamps appealed.

Everybody stood stock-still, gazing, attendant.

"Eh, children, bless you all for coming! If you grow up-as good as your motherit's all I ask-all I ask. Your mother and I-have never had a cross word-have we, mother?"

"No, aunty," said Clara, with a sweet, touching smile that accentuated the fragile charm of her face.

"Never-since mother was-as tiny as you are."

Aunty Hamps looked up at the ceiling during a few strained breaths, and then smiled for an instant at the departing children, who filed out of the room. Rupert loitered behind, gazing at his mother. Clara, with an exquisite, reassuring gesture and smile, picked up the stout Rupert and kissed him and carried him to the door, while Aunty Hamps looked at mother and son, ecstatic.

"Edwin!" "Yes, aunty?"

They were alone now. She had not loosed his hand. Her voice was very faint, and he bent over her still lower.

"Have you heard from Hilda?" " Not yet-by the second post, perhaps."

" It's about George's eyes, isn't it?"

" Yes."

"She's done quite right - quite right. It's just—just like Hilda. I do hope—and pray—the boy's eyesight—is safe."
"Oh, yes!" said Edwin. "Safe enough!"

"You really think so?"

He nodded.

"What a blessing!" She sighed with relief.

" Edwin!"

"Yes, aunty."

"Has-that girl-gone yet?"

"Who?" he questioned, and more softly: " Minnie, d'you mean?"

Aunty Hamps nodded.

" Yes, Minnie."

" Not yet."

" She's going?"

" Yes.'

"Has she done - the silver - d'you

"She's doing it," answered Edwin, who thought it would be best to carry out the deception with artistic completeness.

"She needn't have her dinner before she

goes."

" No?"

" No." Aunty Hamps's face and tone hardened. "Why should she?"

" All right."

"And if she asks-for her wages-tell her—I say there's nothing due—under the circumstances."

"All right, aunty," Edwin agreed,

desperate.

Maggie, followed by Clara, softly entered the room. Aunty Hamps glanced at them with a certain cautious suspicion, as if one or other of them was capable of thwarting her in the matter of Minnie. Then her eyes closed, and Edwin was aware of a slackening of her hold on his hand.

The doctor who called half an hour later said that she might never speak again, and she never did. Her last conscious moments

were moments of satisfaction.

Edwin slowly released his hand.

"Where's Albert?" he asked Clara, merely for the sake of saying something.

"He's taking the children home, and then he's going to the works. He ought to have gone long ago. There's a dreadful upset there."

"I ought to go, too," he muttered, as a full picture of a lithographic establishment

masterless swept into his mind.

" Have you telegraphed to Hilda?" Clara demanded.

" No."

" Haven't you?"

"What's the use?"

"Well, I should have thought you

"Oh, no!" he said, falsely mild. shall write."

He was immensely glad that Hilda was not present in the house to complicate still

further the human equation.

Instead of remaining late that night at the works, Edwin came back to the house before six o'clock. He had had word that the condition of Tertius Ingpen was still unchanged. Clara had gone home to see to her children's evening meal. Maggie

sat alone in the darkened bedroom, where Aunty Hamps, her features a mere pale blur between the overarching curtains, still withheld the secret of her soul's reality from the world. Even in the final unconsciousness there was something grandiose which lingered from her magnificent deceptions and obstinate effort to safeguard the structure of society.

"What about to-night?" Edwin asked. "Oh, Clara and I will manage."

There was a tap at the door. Edwin opened it. Minnie, abashed but already taking courage, stood there blinking, with a letter in her hand.

"Ah!" he breathed. Hilda's great scrawling calligraphy was on the envelope.

The letter read:

DARLING BOY:

George has influenza, Charlie says. Temp. 102 anyway. So, of course, he can't go out to-morrow. I knew this morning there was something wrong with him. Janet and Charlie send their love.

· Your ever loving wife,

He was exceedingly uplifted and happy and exhausted. Hilda's handwriting moved him. The whole missive was like a personal emanation from her. It lived with her vitality. "Your ever loving wife"!

" My faith in her is never worthy of her," he thought; and his faith leaped up and

became worthy of her.

"George has got influenza," he said indifferently.

"George! But influenza's very serious for him, isn't it?" Maggie showed alarm. "Why should it be?"

"Considering he nearly died of it at

Orgreaves'!"

Maggie had put fear into Edwin-a superstitious fear. Influenza, indeed, might be serious for George. Suppose he died of it? Aunty Hamps—Tertius Ingpen—and now George! All these anxieties mingling with his joy in the thought of Hilda!

"I must go and lie down," he said. He could contain no more sensations.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of Aunty Hamps's funeral, a procession consisting of the following people moved out of the small, stuffy dining-room of her house across the lobby into the drawing-room - the Rev. Christian Flowerdew, the Rev. Guy Cliffe (second minister), the aged Josiah Higginbotham (supernumerary minister), the

chapel and the circuit stewards, the doctor, Edwin, Maggie, Clara, Bert and young Clara Benbow (being respectively the eldest nephew and the eldest niece of the deceased), and finally Albert Benbow. Albert came last because he had constituted himself the marshal of the ceremonies.

In the drawing-room the coffin, with its hideous brass plate and handles, lay on two chairs, and was covered with white wreaths. At the head of the coffin was placed a small table covered with a white cloth; on the cloth a large inlaid box—in which Aunty Hamps had kept odd photographs—and on the box a black book. The drawn blinds created a beautiful, soft, silvery gloom which solemnized everything and made even the clumsy carving on the coffin seem like the finest antique work.

The three ministers ranged themselves round the small table; the others stood in an irregular horseshoe about the coffin, nervous, constrained, and in dread of catching each other's glances. Mr. Higginbotham, by virtue of his age, began to read the service, and Aunty Hamps became "she" and "her" and "our sister."

The interment thus commenced was the result of a compromise between two schools of funebrial manners sharply divergent. Edwin, immediately after the demise, had become aware of influences far stronger than those which had shaped the already half-forgotten interment of old Darius Clayhanger into a form repugnant to him. Both Albert and Clara, but especially Albert, had assumed an elaborate funeral, with a choral service at the Wesleyan chapel, numerous guests, a superb procession, and a substantial and costly meal in the drawing-room to conclude.

Edwin had at once and somewhat domineeringly decided — no guests whatever outside the family, no service at the chapel, every rite reduced to its simplest. When asked why, he had no logical answer.

He soon saw that it would be impossible not to invite a minister and the doctor. Then not only the Wesleyan chapel, but its Sunday-school, sent dignified emissaries, who so little expected a "no" to their honorific suggestions that the no was unuttered and unutterable. Certain other invitations were agreed upon. The Sunday-school announced that it would "walk," and it prepared to walk.

All the emissaries spoke of Aunty Hamps as a saint. Was it conceivable that none of these respectable people had arrived at the truth concerning Aunty Hamps? Or were they simply rewarding her in memory for her ceaseless efforts on behalf of the

safety of society?

Edwin stood like a rock against a service in the Wesleyan chapel. Clara cunningly pointed out to him that the Wesleyan chapel would be heated for the occasion, whereas the chapel at the cemetery, where hundreds of persons had caught their deaths in the few years of its existence, was never heated. His reply showed genius. He would have the service at the house itself.

The decision of the chief mourner might be regretted, and was regretted, but none could impugn it. Thenceforward the ar-

rangements went more smoothly.

In the discussions, Maggie was neutral, thus losing part of the very little prestige which she possessed. Clara and Albert considered Edwin to be excessively high-handed; but they were remarkably moderate in criticism, for the reason that no will had been found.

Maggie and Clara had searched the most secret places of the house for a will, in vain. All that they had found was a brass and copper paper-knife wrapped in tissue-paper and labeled "For Edwin, with aunty's love," and a set of tortoise-shell combs equally wrapped in tissue-paper and labeled "For Maggie, with aunty's love." Naught for Clara! Naught for the chicks!

Albert, who did all the running about, had been to see Mr. Julian Pidduck, the Wesleyan solicitor. Mr. Pidduck knew of no will. Albert had also been to the bank, whose former manager had been a buttress of Wesleyanism. The manager, Mr. Breeze, was ill up-stairs on the residential floor with one of his periodic attacks of boils; the cashier, however, had told Albert that certain securities, but no testament, were deposited at the bank. He had offered to produce the securities, but only to Edwin, as the nearest relative.

Albert had then secretly looked up the pages entitled "Intestates' Estates" in "Whitaker's Almanac," and had discovered that whereas, Aunty Hamps being intestate, her personal property would be divided equally between Edwin, Maggie, and Clara, her real property would go entirely to Edwin. (Edwin also had secretly looked up the same pages.) This gross injustice nearly turned Albert from a Tory into a land-laws reformer. It accounted for the

comparative submissiveness of Clara and Albert before Edwin's arrogance as the arbiter of funerals.

While the ministers succeeded each other in the conduct of the service, each after his different manner, Edwin scrutinized the coffin, and the wreaths, and the cards inscribed with mournful, ecstatic affection that nestled amid the flowers, and the faces of the audience. His thought was:

"This will soon be over now!"

Beneath his gloomy and wearied expression he was not unhappy, but rather hopeful and buoyant, looking forward to approaching felicity. His reflections upon the career of Aunty Hamps were kind, and utterly uncritical. He wondered what her spirit was doing in that moment; the mystery ennobled his mind.

Probing his left-hand pocket, he felt a letter. He had received it that morning from Hilda. George was progressing very well, and Charlie Orgreave had actually brought the oculist with his apparatus to see him at Charlie's house. Charlie would always do impossibilities for Hilda.

The oculist had said that George's vision was normal, and that he must not wear glasses, but that on account of a slight weakness he ought to wear a shade at night, in rooms which should be lighted from the top. In a few days Hilda and George would return.

Edwin anticipated their arrival with an impatience almost gleeful, so anxious was he to begin the new life with Hilda. He saw her ideally. His mind rose to the finest manifestations of her individuality, and the inconveniences of that individuality grew negligible. Withal, he was relieved that George's illness had kept her out of Bursley during the illness, death, and burial of Aunty Hamps.

And then there was a sound of sobbing outside the door. Minnie, sharing humbly but obstinately in the service, according to her station, had broken down in irrational grief at the funeral of the woman whose dying words amounted to an order

for her execution.

Edwin, though touched, could have smiled; and he felt abashed before the lofty and incomprehensible marvels of human nature. Several outraged bent heads twisted round in the direction of the door, but the minister intrepidly continued with the final prayer. Maggie slipped out, the door closed, and the sound of sobbing receded.

After the benediction Albert resumed full activity, while the remainder of the company stared and cleared their throats without exchanging a word. The news that the hearse and coaches had not arrived helped them to talk a little. The representatives of the Sunday-school were already lined up on the pavement, and on the opposite pavement, and in the roadway were knots of ragged, callously inquisitive spectators.

The vehicles could at length be descried on the brow of Church Street. They descended the slope in haste. The four mutes nipped down with agility from the hammercloths, hung their greasy top-hats on the ornamental spikes of the hearse, and sneaked grimly into the house. In a second the flowers were shifted from the coffin, and with startling, accomplished swiftness the coffin was darted out of the room and down the steps into the hearse, and the

flowers replaced.

The ministers and the doctor went first, the chapel officials next, and the chief mourners—Edwin, Albert, and Bert—had the third coach. The women stayed behind at the door, frowning at the murmurous crowd of shabby idlers. The cortège moved. Rain was threatening, and the streets were

muddy.

At the cemetery it was raining, and the walkers made a string of glistening umbrellas; only the paid mutes had no umbrellas. Near the gates, under an umbrella, stood a man with a protruding chin and a wiry, gray mustache. He came straight to Edwin and shook hands. It was Mr. Breeze, the bank manager. His neck, enveloped in a white muffler, showed a large excrescence behind, and he kept his head very carefully in one position.

He said, in his defiant voice:

"I only had the news this morning, and I felt that I should pay the last tribute of respect to the deceased. I had known her in business and privately for many years."

His greeting of Albert was extremely reserved, and Albert showed him a meek face. Albert's overdraft impaired the cordiality

of their relations.

Vehicles, by some municipal caprice, were forbidden to enter the cemetery. And in the rain, between the stone-perpetuated great names of the town's history — the Boultons, the Lawtons, the Blackshaws, the Beardmores, the Gardiners, the Longsons, the Hulmes, the Suttons, the Greenes,

the Brindleys, the Baineses, and the Woods—the long procession, preceded by Aunty Hamps, tramped for a third of a mile along the asphalted path winding past

the chapel to the graveside.

All the way Mr. Breeze, between Edwin and Albert, with Bert a yard to the rear, talked about boils, and Edwin said "yes" and "no" and Albert said nothing. At the graveside the three ministers removed their flat, round hats and put on skull-caps, while skilfully holding their umbrellas aloft. Then Mr. Flowerdew read from a little book, and the grave-digger, with absolute precision, accompanied his words with three castings of earth into the hollow of the grave.

When the ministers pocketed their skullcaps and resumed their hats, everybody except Edwin appeared to feel relief in turning away from the grave. Faces brightened; footsteps were more alert; but Edwin had a pang of depression at the eagerness with which all the mourners abandoned Aunty Hamps to her strange and desolate resting-place amid the sinister

population of corpses.

He lingered, glancing about. Mr. Breeze also lingered, and then in his downright manner squarely approached Edwin.

"I'll walk down with ye to the gates,"

said he.

"Yes," said Edwin.

Mr. Breeze moved his head with care. Their umbrellas touched.

"I've got that will for you," said Mr. Breeze in a confidential tone.

"What will?"
"Mrs. Hamps's."

"But your cashier said there was no will

at your place!"

"My cashier doesn't know everything," remarked Mr. Breeze. "Mrs. Hamps deposited her will with me, as much as a friend as anything else. The fact is I had it in my private safe. I should have called with it this morning, but I knew that you'd be busy; and, what's more, I can't go paying calls of a morning. Here it is!"

Mr. Breeze drew an indorsed foolscap envelope from the breast pocket of his over-

coat, and handed it to Edwin.

"Thanks," said Edwin very curtly; but beneath the careful imperturbability of his demeanor he was not unagitated.

"I've got a receipt for you to sign," said Mr. Breeze. "It's slipped into the envelope. Here's an ink-pencil." Edwin comprehended that he must stand still in the rain and sign a receipt for the will as best he could under an umbrella. He complied. Mr. Breeze said no more.

"Good-by, Mr. Breeze," said Edwin at

he gates.

"Good day to you, Mr. Clayhanger."

The coaches trotted down the first part of the hill into Bursley, but as soon as the road became a street, with observant houses on either side, the pace was reduced to a

proper solemnity.

Edwin was amused and even uplifted by the thought of the will in his pocket. To Albert he said nothing on the subject. Albert talked about his misfortunes at the works, including the last straw of the engine accident; and all the time he was vaguely indicating reasons—the presence of Bert in the carriage necessitated reticence—for his default in paying interest to Maggie.

As they approached the Clowes Hospital, Edwin saw a nurse in a bonnet, white bow, and fluent blue robe emerging from the shrubbery and putting up an umbrella.

"There's Nurse Faulkner!" he exclaimed to Albert. "I must just ask her how Ing-

pen is. I haven't heard to-day."

"But you can't stop the procession!" Albert protested in horror, unable to conceive of such an enormity.

"I'll just slip out!" said Edwin, guiltily. He spoke to the coachman, and the coach halted. In an instant he was on the pave-

"Drive on," he instructed the coachman, and to the outraged Albert: "I'll walk

Nurse Faulkner stopped and smiled upon the visitor.

"Good afternoon, nurse."

"Good morning, Mr. Clayhanger. I'm just going out for my morning walk before breakfast." said she.

She had dimples. These dimples quite ignored Edwin's mourning and the fact that he had quitted a funeral to speak to her.

"How is Mr. Ingpen to-day?" Edwin

She grew serious, and said in a low, cheerful tone:

"I think he's going on pretty well." Edwin was startled.

" D'you mean he's getting better?"

"Slowly. He's taking food more easily. He was undoubtedly better this morning. I haven't seen him since, of course."

" But the matron seemed to think-" He . stopped, for the dimples began to reappear.

"Matron always fears the worst, you know," said Nurse Faulkner, not without

" Does she?"

The matron had never held out hope to Edwin: and he had unquestioningly accepted her opinion. It had not occurred to him that the matron of a hospital could be led astray by her instinctive, unconscious appetite for gloom and disaster.

The nurse nodded.

"Then you think he'll pull through?"

"I'm pretty sure he will; but, of course, I've not seen the doctor-I mean since the first night."

" I'm awfully glad!"

" His brother came over from Darlington to see him yesterday, you know."

"Yes, I just missed him."

The nurse gave a little bow as she moved up the road.

The news about Ingpen filled him with bright joy. Everything was going well. Hilda would soon be home; George's eyes were not seriously wrong; the awful funeral was over; and his friend was out of danger-marvelously restored to him.

Then he thought of the will. He glanced about to see whether anybody of importance was watching him. There was nobody. The coaches were a hundred yards in front. He drew out the envelope containing the will, managed to extract the will from the envelope, and opened the document-not very easily, because he was holding his umbrella.

Then, walking along, he read the will of Aunty Hamps. It was quickly spotted

with rain-drops.

At the house the blinds were drawn up, and the women sedately cheerful. Maggie was actually teasing Bert about his new hat, and young Clara, active among the preparations for tea for six, was intensely and seriously proud at being included in the ceremonial party of adults.

"Oh, by the way, there's a telegram for you," said Maggie, as Minnie left the dining-room after serving the last trayful

of hot dishes and pots.

Edwin took the telegram. It was from Hilda, to say that she and George would return on the morrow.

"But what about the house being cleaned, and what about servants?" cried

Edwin, affecting, in order to conceal his pleasure, an annoyance which he did not in the least feel.

"Oh, Mrs. Tams has been looking after the house-I shall go round and see her after tea. I've got one servant for Hilda."

"You never told me anything about it,"

said Edwin.

"Didn't I?" Maggie innocently murmured. " And then Minnie can go and help if necessary until you're all settled again. Hadn't we better have the gas lighted before we begin?"

After tea, immediately the children had been sent home, Edwin said self-consciously

to Albert:

" I've got something for you."

And offered the will. Maggie and Clara were up-stairs.

" What is it?"

"It aunty's will. Breeze had it. He gave it to me in the cemetery. It seems he only knew this morning aunty was dead. I think that was why he came up."

"Well, I'm-" Albert muttered. His hand trembled as he opened the

Aunty Hamps had made Edwin sole executor, and had left all her property in trust for Clara's children. Evidently she had reasoned that Edwin and Maggie had all they needed, and that the children of such a father as Albert could only be effectually helped in one way, which way she had chosen.

The will was seven years old, and the astounding thing was that she had drawn it herself, probably having copied some of the wording from some source unknown. It was a wise if a rather ruthless will; and its provisions, like the manner of making it, were absolutely characteristic of the testatrix. Too mean to employ a lawyer, she had yet had a magnificent gesture of generosity toward that Benbow brood which she adored in her grandiose way.

Further, she had been clever enough not to invalidate the will by some negligent informality. It was as tight as if Julian Pid-

duck himself had drawn it.

She had managed to put Albert in a position highly exasperating. He was both very pleased and very vexed. In slighting him she had aggrandized his children.

"What of it?" he asked nervously. "It's all right, so far as I'm concerned," said Edwin, with a short laugh.

He was sincere, for he had no desire

whatever to take a share of his aunt's modest wealth. He shrank from the trusteeship, but he knew that he could not avoid it, and he was getting accustomed to power and dominion. Albert would have to knuckle down to him, and Clara, too.

## CHAPTER XX

## THE DISCOVERY

HILDA showed her smiling, flattering face at the door of Edwin's office at a few minutes to one o'clock on Saturday morning, and said:

"I had to go to the dressmaker's after my shopping, so I thought I might as well call for you." She added with deference:

"But I can wait if you're busy."

True that the question of mourning had taken her to the dressmaker's, and that the dressmaker lived in Shawport Lane, not four minutes from the works; but such accidents had nothing to do with her call, which, being part of a scheme of Hilda's, would have occurred in any case.

"I'm ready," said Edwin, pleased by the vision of his wife in the stylish, wide-sleeved black jacket and black hat which she had bought in London. "What have you got

in that parcel?"

"It's your new office-coat," Hilda replied, depositing on the desk the parcel which had been partly concealed behind her muff. "I've mended the sleeves."

" Aha!" Edwin lightly murmured. " Let's

have a look at it!"

His benevolent attitude toward the new office-coat surprised and charmed her. Before her journey to London with George, he would have jealously resented any interfering hand among his apparel; but since her return he had been exquisitely amenable. She thought, proud of herself:

"It's easy to manage him. I never used to go quite the right way about it."

Her new system, which was one of the results of contact with London, and which had been inaugurated a week earlier on the platform of Knype station when she stepped down from the London train, consisted chiefly in smiles, voice-control, and other devices to make Edwin believe in any discussion that she fully appreciated his point of view. Often, she was startled to find, this simulation had the unexpected result of causing her actually to appreciate his point of view. It was very curious!

London, indeed, had had its effect on Hilda. She had seen the Five Towns from a distance, and as something definitely provincial. Having lived for years at Brighton, which is almost a suburb of London, and also for a short time in London itself, she could not think of herself as a provincial, in the full sense in which Edwin, for example, was a provincial.

She had gone to London with the confidence of an initiate returning to the scene of initiation. And, once she was there, all her old condescensions toward the dirty and primitive Five Towns had very quickly

revived.

She discovered Charlie Orgreave, the fairly successful doctor in Ealing, to be the perfect Londoner, and Janet, no longer useless and forlorn, scarcely less so. These two, indeed, had the air of having at length reached their proper home after being born in exile.

The same was true of Johnnie Orgreave, now safely through the matrimonial court and married to his blond Adela, formerly the ripping Mrs. Chris Hamson, whose money had bought him a junior partnership in an important architectural firm in Russell Square. Johnnie and Adela had come over from Bedford Park to Ealing to see Hilda, and Hilda had dined with them at Bedford Park, at a table illuminated by crimsonshaded night-lights — a repast utterly different in its appointments and atmosphere from anything conceivable in Trafalgar Road.

The current Five Towns notion of Johnnie and his wife as two morally ruined creatures, hiding for the rest of their lives in shame from an outraged public opinion, seemed merely comic in Ealing and Bedford Park. These people referred to the Five Towns with negligent affection, but with disdain, as to a community which, with all its good qualities, had not yet emerged from barbarism.

When Hilda mentioned that she hoped soon to move Edwin into a country house, they applauded, and implied that no other course was possible. Withal, their respect, to say nothing of their regard, for Edwin, the astute and successful man of business,

was obvious and genuine.

Thus, when Hilda got into the train at Euston, she had in her head a plan of campaign compared to which the scheme entertained by her on the afternoon of the disastrous servant episode seemed amateurish and incomplete. She had perceived, as never before, the superior value of the suave and refined social methods of the metropolitan middle classes, as compared with the manners of the Five Towns. It seemed to her, in her new enthusiasm for the art of life, that if she had ever had a difficulty with Edwin, her own clumsiness was to blame.

She saw Edwin as an instrument to be played upon, and herself as a virtuoso. In such an attitude there was necessarily a condescension. Yet this condescension somehow did not in the least affect the tenderness and the fever of her longing for

Edwin.

Her excitement grew as the train passed across the dusky December plain toward him. She knew that he was better than any of the people she had left — either more capable, or more reliable, or more charitable, or all three. She knew that most of the people she had left were at heart snobs.

"Am I becoming a snob?" she asked herself. She had pondered the question before. "I don't care if it is snobbishness. I want certain things, and I will have them, and they can call it what they like!"

Like the majority of women, she was incapable of being frightened by the names of her desires. She might be snobbish in one part of her, but in another she had fierce scorn for all that Ealing stood for.

And in Edwin she admired nothing more than the fact that success had not modified his politics. She could not honestly say the same for herself; and assuredly the Orgreaves could not say the same for themselves. In politics Edwin was an inspiration to her.

When the train entered the fiery zone of industry, and slackened speed amid the squalid streets, and stopped at Knype station in front of a crowd of local lowering faces and mackintoshed and gaitered forms, and the damp chill of the Five Towns came in through the opened door of the compartment, her heart fell, and she regretted the elegance of Ealing; but simultaneously her heart was beating with ecstatic expectation. She saw Edwin's face. It was a local face. He wore mourning. He saw her; his eye lighted; his wistful smile appeared.

"Yes," she thought, "he is the same as my image of him. He is better than any of them. I am safe. What a shame to have

left him all alone!"

Her joy in being near him again made her tingle. His hand thrilled her. His matter-of-fact calmness pleased her. She thought:

"I know him, with all his matter-of-fact

calmness.'

"Hello, kid!" Edwin addressed George with man-to-man negligence. "Been looking after your mother?"

George answered like a Londoner. It was a fact that George had looked after her. London had matured him; he had

picked up a little Ealing.

He was past Edwin's shoulder now. Indeed, he was surprisingly near to being a man. On the platform they surrounded her with their masculine protection. George's secret deep respect for Edwin was not hidden from her.

And yet all the time, in her joy, reliance, love, admiration, eating him with her eyes, she was condescending to Edwin, because she had plans for his good. She knew better than he did what would be for his good. And he was a provincial and didn't suspect it.

"My poor boy!" she had said gleefully in the cab, pulling suddenly at a loose button of the old gray coat which he wore surreptitiously under his new black overcoat. "My poor boy, what a dreadful state

you're in!'

Through this loose button, she was his mother, his good angel, his savior. The trifle had led to a general visitation of his wardrobe, conducted by her with metropolitan skill in humoring his susceptibilities.

Edwin tried on the new office-coat with the self-consciousness that none but an odious dandy can avoid on such occasions.

"It seems warmer than the old one," he said, pleased to have her beholding him and interesting herself in him, especially in his office.

"Yes," said she. "I've put some washleather inside the lining at the back."

"Why?"

"Well, didn't you say you felt the cold from the window? It's bad for the liver." Her glance added: "Am I not a clever woman?"

"That's the end of that, I hope, darling," she remarked, picking up the old office-coat and dropping it with charming, affected disgust into the waste-paper basket.

He shouted for the clerk, who entered

with some letters for signature.

"I've asked Maggie to come up for the

week-end," said Hilda carelessly, when they were alone together, and Edwin was straightening the desk preparatory to de-

parture.

Since her return she had become far more friendly with Maggie than ever beforenot because Maggie had revealed any new charm, but because she saw in Maggie a victim of injustice. Nothing during the week had more severely tested Hilda's new methods of intercourse with Edwin than the disclosure of the provisions of Aunty Hamps's will, which she had at once and definitely set down as monstrous. It was not, she was convinced, that she coveted money, but that she hated unfairness. Why the Benbows have all Aunty Hamps's possessions, and Edwin and Maggie, who had done a thousand times more for her than the Benbows, nothing?

Hilda's conversation implied that the Benbows ought to be ashamed of themselves; and when Edwin pointed out that their good luck was not their fault, only a miracle of self-control had enabled her to say nicely: "That's quite true," instead of sneering: "That's you all over, Edwin!"

When she learned that Edwin would receive not a penny for his labors as executor and trustee for the Benbow children, she

was speechless.

"Oh!" said Edwin. "So Maggie's coming for the week-end, is she? Well, that's

not a bad scheme."

He knew that Maggie had been very helpful about servants, and that, the second servant having not yet arrived, she would certainly do much more work in the house than she "made."

"Yes," said Hilda. "I've called there

this morning."

" And what's she doing with Minnie?"

"We've settled all that," said Hilda proudly. Her championship of Minnie had been as passionate as her ruthless verdict upon Minnie's dead mistress. "The girl's aunt was there when I called. We've settled she is to go to Stone, and Maggie and I shall do something for her; and when it's all over, I may take her on as housemaid."

"Then Maggie 'll be without a servant?"

"No, she won't. We shall manage that. Besides, I suppose Maggie won't stay on in that house all by herself forever! It's just the right size, I see."

" Just!" said Edwin.

He was spreading over his desk a dustsheet with a red scalloped edging, which Hilda had presented to him three days earlier. She gazed at him with composed and justifiable self-satisfaction, as if saying:

"Leave absolutely everything to me in my department, and see how smooth your

life will be!"

He would never praise her, and she had a very healthy appetite for praise, which appetite always went hungry. But now, instead of resenting his niggardly reserve, she said to herself:

"Poor boy! He can't bring himself to pay compliments, that's it. But his eyes are full of delicious compliments."

She approached the real business of her

"I was thinking we might have gone over to see Ingpen this afternoon."

"Well, let's."

Ingpen, convalescent, had insisted, two days earlier, on being removed to his own house, near the village of Stockbrook. The departure was a surprising example of the mere power of volition on the part of a patient.

"There's no decent train to go, and none at all to come back until nearly nine o'clock. And we can't cycle in this weather—at least, I can't, especially in the dark."

"Well, what about Sunday?"

The Sunday trains are worse."

"What a ghastly line!" said Edwin.

"And they have the cheek to pay five per cent!"

"It's a pity you haven't got a dog-cart, isn't it?" said Hilda, lightly smiling. "Because then we could use the works horse now and then, and it wouldn't really cost anything extra, would it?"

Edwin shook his head, agreeably, but

with firmness.

She knew it. She was aware of the whole theory of horse-owning among the upper trading class in the Five Towns. A butcher might use his cob for pleasure on Sundays—he never used it for pleasure on any other day—but traders on a higher plane than butchers drew between the works and the house a line which a works horse was not permitted to cross.

One or two, perhaps—but not the most solid — would put a carter into a livery overcoat and a shabby top-hat, and describe him as a coachman, while on rare occasions he drove a landau or a victoria picked up cheap at Axe or Market Drayton. But the majority had no pretensions to the

owning of private carriages. Even the Orgreaves had never dreamed of a carriage.

Old Darius Clayhanger would have been staggered into profanity by the suggestion of such a thing. Indeed, until some time after old Clayhanger's death the printing business had been content to deliver all its orders in a boy-pushed hand-cart. Only when Edwin discovered that, for instance, two thousand catalogues on clay-faced paper could not be respectably delivered in a hand-cart, had he steeled himself to the prodigious move of setting up a stable. He had found an entirely trustworthy hostler-carter with the comfortable name of Unchpin, and, an animal and a tradesman's covered cart having been bought, he had left the affair to Unchpin. At home the horse and cart had always been regarded as being just as exclusively a works item as the printing-machine or the steamengine.

"I suppose," said Hilda carefully, "you've got all the work one horse can do?"

" And more."

"Then why don't you buy another?"
She tried to speak carelessly, without genuine interest.

"Yes, no doubt!" Edwin answered dryly. "And build a fresh stable, too."

"Haven't you got room for two?"
"Come along and look, and then per

"Come along and look, and then perhaps you'll be satisfied."

Buzzers, sirens, and whistles began to sound in the neighborhood. It was one o'clock.

"Shall I? Your overcoat collar's turned

up behind. Let me do it."

They went out through the clerk's office. Edwin gave a sidewise nod to Simpson. In the passage some girls and a few men were already hurrying forth. None of them took notice of Edwin and Hilda. They all plunged for the street as if the works had been on fire.

In the small yard stood the horseless cart, with "Edwin Clayhanger, Lithographer and Steam Printer, Bursley," on both its sides. The stable and cart-shed were in one penthouse, and to get to the stable it was necessary to pass through the cart-shed.

Unchpin, a fat man of forty with a face marked by black seams, was bending over a chaff-cutter in the cart-shed. He ignored the intruders. The stable consisted of one large loose-box, in which a gray animal was restlessly moving. "You see!" Edwin muttered curtly.

"Oh, what a beautiful horse! I've never seen him before."

"Her," Edwin corrected.

"Is it a mare?"
"So they say."

"I never knew you'd got a fresh one."
"I haven't, yet. I've taken this one for a fortnight's trial, from Chawner. How's she doing, Unchpin?" he called to the cart-shed.

Unchpin looked round and stared.

"Bit light," he growled, and turned back to the chaff-cutter.

"I thought so," said Edwin.

"But her's a good un," he added.

"But where's the old horse?" asked Hilda.

"With God," Edwin replied. "Dropped down dead last week."

The mare inquisitively but cautiously put her muzzle over the door of the box. Hilda stroked her. The animal's mysterious eyes, her beautiful coat, her broad back, her general bigness relatively to Hilda, the sound of her feet among the litter on the paving-stones, the smell of the stable—these things enchanted Hilda.

"I should adore horses!" she breathed, half to herself, ecstatically; and wondered whether she would ever be able to work her will on Edwin in the matter of a dog-

cart.

Her mind went back enviously to Tavy Mansion and Dartmoor; but she felt that Edwin had not enough elasticity to comprehend the rapture of her dream. She foresaw nearly endless trouble and altercation and chicane before she could achieve her end. She was ready to despair, but she remembered her resolutions, and took heart.

"I say, Unchpin," said Edwin, "I suppose this box couldn't be made into two stalls?"

Unchpin gazed gloomily into the box.

" It could," he announced.

"Could you get a trap into the shed, as well as the cart?"

"Aye! If ye dropped th' shafts o' th' trap under th' cart. What of it, mester?"
"Nothing. Only missis is going to have

this mare."

Hilda had moved a little away into the yard. Edwin approached her, flushing slightly, and with a self-consciousness which he tried to dissipate with one wink. Hilda's face was set hard.

"I must just go back to the office," she said in a queer voice.

She walked quickly, Edwin following. Simpson beheld their return with gentle

surprise

In the private office Hilda shut the door. She then ran to the puzzled Edwin, and kissed him with the most startling vehemence, clasping her arms round his neck. She preferred his strange, uncouth method of granting a request, of yielding, of flattering her caprice, to any politer and more conventional methods of the

metropolis.

When they came again out of the office, after the sacred rite, and Edwin, as uplifted as she, glanced back nevertheless at the sheeted desk and the safe and the other objects in the room, with the half-mechanical, habitual solicitude of a man from whom the weight of responsibility is never lifted, she felt saddened because she could not enter utterly into his impenetrable soul, and live through all his emotions, and comprehend like a creator the always baffling wistfulness of his eyes.

This sadness was joy; it was the aura of her tremendous satisfaction in his individuality, and in her triumph, and in the

thought:

"I alone stand between him and utter desolation!"

"Whoa!" exclaimed Hilda broadly, bringing the mare and the vehicle to a standstill in front of the Live and Let Live Inn, in the main street of the village of Stockbrook, which lay about a mile and a half off the highroad from the Five Towns to Axe.

"And no bones broken!" exclaimed Edwin.

The village of Stockbrook gave the illusion that hundreds of English villages were giving that Christmas morning—the illusion that its name was Arcadia, and that the forces of civilization could go no further. More suave than a Dutch village, incomparably neater and cleaner and more delicately finished than a French village, it presented, in the still, complacent atmosphere of long tradition, a picturesque medley of tiny architectures, nearly every aspect of which was beautiful.

If seven people of different ages and sexes lived in a two-roomed cottage, under a thatched roof hollowed by the weight of years, without drains and without water, and also without freedom, the beholder was yet bound to conclude that by some mysterious virtue their existence must be gracious, happy, and in fact ideal—especially on Christmas Day, though Christmas Day was also quarter day—and that they would not on any account have it altered in the slightest degree.

But, after all, the illusion of Arcadia was not entirely an illusion. In this calm, rimedecked Christmas-imbued village with its motionless trees enchanted beneath a vast, gray, impenetrable cloud, a sort of relative finality had indeed been reached—the end of an epoch that was awaiting dissolution.

Edwin had not easily agreed to the project of shutting up house for the day and eating the Christmas dinner with Tertius Ingpen. But the situation of Ingpen, Hilda's strong desire, her teasing promise of a surprise, and the still continuing dearth of servants had been good arguments to

persuade him.

Though he had left Trafalgar Road moody and captious, thinking all the time of the deserted and cold home, he had arrived in Stockbrook tingling and happy, and proud of Hilda—proud of her verve, her persistency, and her success. She had carried him very far on the wave of her new enthusiasm for horse-traction. She had beguiled him into immediately spending mighty sums on a dog-cart, new harness, rugs, a driving-apron, and a dandiacal whip.

She had exhausted Unchpin, upset the routine of the lithographic works, and gravely overworked the mare, in her determination to learn to drive. She had had the equipage out at night for her lessons. On the other hand, she had not in the least troubled herself about the purchase of a second horse for mercantile purposes, and a second horse had not yet been bought.

When she had announced that she would herself drive her husband and son over to Stockbrook, Edwin had absolutely negatived the idea; but Unchpin had been on her side. She had done the double journey with Unchpin, who judged her capable, and the mare, eight years old, quite reliable; and who, moreover, wanted Christmas as much as possible to himself.

And Hilda had triumphed. Walking the mare up-hill—and also down-hill—she had achieved Stockbrook in safety; and the conquering air with which she drew up at the Live and Let Live was exquisite, de-

licious, thrilling. Edwin thought that he himself had not lived in vain if he could procure her such sensations as her glowing face then displayed. Her occasionally overbearing tenacity, and the little jars which good resolutions several weeks old had naturally not been powerful enough to prevent, were forgotten and iorgiven.

Catch me, both of you!" cried Hilda. Edwin had got down, and walked round behind the vehicle to the footpath, where

George stood grinning.

Hilda jumped rather wildly. It was Edwin who countered the shock of her descent. The edge of her velvet hat knocked against his forehead, disarranging his cap. He could smell the velvet, as for an instant he held his wife - strangely acquiescent and yielding-in his arms, and there was something intimately feminine in the faint odor. All Hilda's happiness seemed to pass into him, and that felicity sufficed for him. He did not desire any happiness personal to himself.

" Hello! Here's Mr. Ingpen!" announced George, as he threw the colored

rug on the mare.

Ingpen, pale and thickly enveloped, came slowly round the bend of the road, waving and smiling. He had had a relapse, after a too-early sortie, and was recovering from it.

"I made sure you'd be about here," he said, shaking hands. "Merry Christmas,

"What about all your parcels, Hilda?" Edwin inquired.

"Oh, we'll call for them afterward."

" Afterward?"

"Yes. Come along-before you catch a chill." She winked openly at Ingpen, who returned the wink. "Come along, dear. It's not far. We have to walk across the fields."

" Put her up, sir?" asked the stableman. "Yes, and give her a bit of a rub down," Edwin replied, absently, remembering various references of Hilda's to a surprise.

His heart misgave him. Ingpen and Hilda looked like plotters. He had a notion that living with a woman was comparable to living with a volcano - you never know when a dangerous eruption might not

Within three minutes the first and minor catastrophe had occurred.

"Bit sticky, this field-path of yours," said Edwin, uneasily.

They were all four slithering about in brown clay under a ragged hedge in which a few red berries glowed.

"It was as hard as iron the day before

yesterday," said Hilda.
"Oh! So you were here the day before yesterday, were you? What's that house there?"

Edwin turned to Ingpen. -

"He's guessed it in one!" Ingpen murmured, and then went off into his charac-

teristic crescendo laugh.

The upper part of a late eighteenthcentury house, squat and square, with yellow walls, black, uncurtained windows, high, slim chimneys, and a blue-slate roof, showed like a gigantic and mysterious fruit in a clump of variegated trees, some of which were evergreen.

"Ladderedge Hall, my boy," said Ingpen. "Seat of the Beechinors for about a

hundred years."

"Seat, eh?" Edwin murmured sarcas-

tically.

"It's been empty for two years," remarked Hilda brightly. "So we thought we'd have a look at it."

Edwin said to himself that he had divined all along what the surprise was. She well knew that the idea of living in the country was extremely repugnant to him, and that nothing would ever induce him to consent to it; and yet she must needs lay this trap for him, prepare this infantile " surprise," and thereby spoil his Christmas -she who a few moments earlier had been the embodiment of surrender in his arms!

He said no word. He hummed a few notes and glanced airily to right and left with an effort after unconcern. The presence of Ingpen and the boy, and the fact of Christmas, forbade him to speak freely. The appearance of amity—and the more high-spirited the better-must be kept up

throughout the day.

Nevertheless, in his heart he challenged Hilda desperately. All her good qualities became insignificant, all his benevolent estimates of her seemed ridiculous. was the impossible woman. He had made her a present of a horse and a trap-solely to please her-and this was his reward! The more rope you gave these creatures, the more they wanted! But he would give no more rope. Compromise was at an end.

He continued to glance airily about, and at intervals to hum a few notes.

Over a stile they dropped into a rutty

Opposite was the worn iron side-road. gate of Ladderedge Hall, with a houseagent's board on it. A short, curved gravel drive, filmed with green, led to the front door of the house. In front were a lawn and a flower-garden, beyond a paddock, and behind a vegetable-garden and a glimpse of stabling; a compact property!

Ingpen drew a great key from his pocket. The plotters were all prepared; they took their victim for a simpleton!

In the damp, echoing interior Edwin gazed without seeing, and heard as in a dream, without listening. This was the hall, this the dining-room, this the drawing-room, this the morning-room. White marble mantelpieces, prehistoric grates, wall-paper hanging in strips, cobwebs, uneven floors, scaly ceilings, the miasma of human memories!

This was the kitchen, enormous! Then the larder, enormous, and the scullery still more enormous, with a pump-handle flanking the slop-stone! No water. No gas.

And what was this room opening out of the kitchen? Oh, that must be the servants' hall. Servants' hall, indeed! Imagine Edwin Clayhanger living in a "hall," with a servants' hall therein! Snobbishness unthinkable!

On the first floor, endless bedrooms, but no bath-room. Here, though, was a small bedroom that would make a splendid bathroom. Ingpen, the ever expert, conceived a tank-room in the roof, and traced routes

for plumbers' pipes.

George, excited, and comprehending that he must conduct himself as behooved an architect, ran up to the attic floor to study on the spot the problem of the tank-room, and Ingpen followed. Edwin stared out of a window at the prospect of the Arcadian village lying a little below across the sloping fields.

"Come along, Edwin," Hilda coaxed.

Yes, she had pretended a deep concern for the welfare of the suffering, feckless bachelor, Tertius Ingpen. She had paid visit after visit in order to watch over his convalescence. Choosing to ignore his scorn for all her sex, she had grown more friendly with him than even Edwin had ever been. And all the time she had merely pursued a private design-with what girlish deceitfulness!

In the emptiness of the house the voices of Ingpen and George echoed from above down the second flight of stairs.

"No good going to the attics," muttered Edwin, on the landing.

Hilda, half cajoling, half fretful, pro-

"Now, Edwin, don't be disagreeable!"

He followed her on high, martyrized, and heard Ingpen saying that the place could be had on a repairing lease for sixty-five pounds a year, and that perhaps twelve hundred pounds would buy it. Dirt cheap!

"Ah!" Edwin murmured. "I know those repairing leases! A thousand pounds wouldn't make this barn fit to live in."

He knew that Ingpen and Hilda exchanged glances.

"It's larger than Tavy Mansion," said Hilda.

Tavy Mansion! There was the secret! Tavy Mansion was at the bottom of her scheme. Alicia Hesketh had a fine house, and Hilda must have a finer.

"Of course, it isn't larger than Tavy Mansion!" he rejoined sharply. "It isn't

as large."

"Oh, Edwin! How can you say such things!"

In the portico, as Ingpen was relocking the door, the husband said negligently, superiorly, cheerfully:

"It's not so bad. I expect there's hundreds of places like this up and down the

country-going cheap."

The walk back to the Live and Let Live was irked by constraint, against which every one fought nobly, smiling, laughing, making remarks about cock-robins, the sky, the Christmas dinner.

"So I hear it's settled you're going to London when you leave school, kiddy," said Tertius Ingpen, to bridge over a fearful hiatus in the prittle-prattle.

"It's more than I hear anyway!" Ed-

win thought.

Hilda had told him that during the visit to London the project for articling George to Johnnie Orgreave had been revived, but she had not said that a decision had been taken. Though Edwin, from careful pride, had not spoken freely - George being Hilda's affair and not his-he had shown no enthusiasm. Johnnie Orgreave had sunk permanently in his esteem—scarcely less so than Jimmie, whose conjugal eccentricities had scandalized the Five Towns and were achieving the ruin of the Orgreave practise; or than Tom, who was deveolping into a miser.

Moreover, he did not at all care for

George going to London. And now he learned from Ingpen that George's destiny

was fixed.

Did "they" seriously expect him to travel from Ladderedge Hall to his works, and from his works to Ladderedge Hall, every week-day of his life? He laughed sardonically to himself.

"I sha'n't take that house, you know," said Edwin, casually and yet confidentially, in a pause which followed a long analysis, by Ingpen, of Ingpen's sensations in hospital before he was out of danger.

They sat on opposite sides of a splendidly extravagant fire in Ingpen's dining-room.

Ingpen, sprawling in a shabby, uncomfortable chair, and flushed with the activity of digestion, raised his eyebrows, squinted down at the cigarette between his lips, and answered impartially:

"No. So I gather. Of course, you must understand it was Hilda's plan to go up there. I merely fell in with it—simplest

thing to do in these cases!"

" Certainly."

In the succeeding silence of satisfaction and relief could be heard George, in the drawing-room above, practising again the piano part of a Haydn violin sonata which he had very nervously tried over with Ingpen while they were awaiting dinner.

Ingpen said suddenly:

"I say, old chap! Why have you never mentioned that you happened to meet a certain person in my room at Hanbridge that night you went over there for me?"

He frowned. Edwin had a thrill, pleasurable and apprehensive, at the prospect

of a supreme confidence.

"It was no earthly business of mine," he

answered lightly.

And Ingpen said, with a simple directness that flattered Edwin to the heart:

"Naturally, I knew I was quite safe in your hands. I've reassured the lady."

Ingpen smiled slightly. Edwin was too proud to tell Ingpen that he had not said a word to Hilda, and Ingpen was too proud to tell Edwin that he assumed as much.

At that moment Hilda came into the room, murmuring a carol that some children of Stockbrook had sung on the door-

step during dinner.

"Don't be afraid—I'm not going to interrupt. I know you're in the thick of it," she said archly, not guessing how exactly truthful she was. Ingpen rejoined with irony:

"You don't mean to say you've already finished explaining to Mrs. Dummer how she ought to run my house for me?"

"How soon do you mean to have this

table cleared?" asked Hilda.

The Christmas dinner, served by a raw girl in a large bluish-white pinafore, temporarily hired to assist Mrs. Dummer, the housekeeper, had been a good one. Its only real fault was that it had had a little too much the air of being a special and mighty effort. But now, under Hilda's quizzing gaze, not merely the table, but the room and the house, sank to the tenth rate.

The coarse imperfections of the linen and the cutlery grew very apparent. And the untidiness of the room, heaped with accumulations of newspapers, magazines, documents, books, boxes, and musical-instrument cases, loudly accused the solitary despot whose daily caprices of arrangement were perpetuated and rendered sacred by the ukase that nothing was to be disturbed. Hilda's glinting eyes seemed to challenge every corner and dark place to confess its shameful dirt.

"This table," retorted Ingpen bravely, is going to be cleared when it won't dis-

turb me to have it cleared!"

"All right," said Hilda. "But Mrs. Dummer does want to get on with her

washing-up."

"Look here, madam," Ingpen replied.
"You're a little ray of sunshine and all that, and I'm the first to say so; but I'm not your husband." He made a warning gesture. "Now don't say you'd be sorry for any woman I was the husband of. Think of something more original." He burst out laughing.

"Please, I only popped in to say that it's nearly a quarter to three, and George and I will go down to the inn and bring the dog-cart up here. I want a little walk. We sha'n't get home till dark, as it is."

"Oh, chance it and stop for tea, and all

will be forgiven!"
"Drive home in the dark? Not much!"

Edwin murmured.

"He's afraid of my driving," said Hilda.
When Edwin and Ingpen were alone together once more, Ingpen's expression changed back instantly to that which Hilda

had disturbed.

"Her husband's in a lunatic asylum, I may tell you," said Ingpen.

"Whose?"

"The young woman's in question."

For Edwin, it was as if a door had opened in a wall and disclosed a vast, unsuspected garden of romance.

Really?'

"Yes, my boy," Ingpen went on, quietly, but not without a naive and healthy pride in the sudden display of the marvelous garden. "And I didn't meet her at a concert, or on the Grand Canal, or anything of that sort. I met her in a mill at Oldham while I was doing my job. He was the boss of the mill. I walked into an office, and he was lying on the floor on the flat of his back, and she was wiping her feet on his chest. He was saying in a very anxious tone: 'You aren't half wiping them. Harder! Harder!' That was his little weakness, you see. He happened to be convinced that he was a door-mat. She had been hiding the thing for weeks, coming with him to the works, and so on, to calm him." Ingpen spoke more quickly and excitedly. "I never saw a more awful thing in my life! And coming across it suddenly, you see! You should have seen the serious expression on his face, simply bursting with anxiety for her to wipe her boots properly on him. And her face when she caught sight of me! Oh, dreadful, dreadful!" Ingpen paused, and then continued calmly: "Of course, I soon tumbled to it. He went raving mad the same afternoon, and he's been more or less raving mad ever since."

"What a ghastly business! Any chil-

dren?"

"No, thank God!" Ingpen answered with fresh emotion. "But don't you forget that she's still the wife of that lunatic, and he'll probably live forever. She's tied up to him just as if she was tied up to a post. Those are our divorce laws! Just think of the situation of that woman!"

"Awful!" Edwin murmured.

"Quite alone in the world, you know!" said Ingpen. "I'm hanged if I know what she'd have done without me. She hadn't a friend—at any rate, she hadn't a friend with a grain of sense. Astonishing how solitary some couples are! It aged her frightfully. She's much younger than she looks. Happily, there was a bit of money—enough, in fact."

Deeply as Edwin had been impressed by the romantic discovery of a woman in Ingpen's room at Hanbridge, he was still more impressed by it now. He saw the whole scene again, and saw it far more poetically. He accused himself of blindness, and also of a certain harshness of attitude toward the woman.

The adventure, in its tragicalness and its clandestine tenderness, was enchanting. He actually envied Ingpen. He also admired him, for Ingpen had obviously conducted the affair with skill and had known how to win devotion.

With an air of impartiality, Ingpen pro-

ceeded:

"You wouldn't see her quite at her best, I'm afraid. She's very shy—and naturally she'd be more shy than ever when you saw her. She's quite a different woman when the shyness has worn off. The first two or three times I met her, I must say I didn't think she was anything more than a nice, well-meaning creature — you know what I mean. But she's much more than that. Can't play, but I believe she has a real feeling for music. She has time for reading, and she does read. And she has a more masculine understanding than nearly any other woman I've ever come across."

"You wait a bit!" thought Edwin. Aloud he responded sympathetically: "Good! Do I understand she's living in

the Five Towns now?"

"Yes," said Ingpen, after a hesitation. He spoke in a peculiar, significant voice, carefully modest.

Edwin was impressed anew by the full revelation of romance which had concealed itself in the squalor of the Five Towns.

"In fact," said Ingpen, "you never know your luck. If she'd been free, I might have been fool enough to get married."

"Why do you say a thing like that?"

"Because I think I should be a fool to marry." Ingpen, tapping his front teeth with his finger-nail, spoke reflectively, persuasively, and with calm detachment.

"Why?" asked Edwin.

"Marriage isn't worth the price — for me, that is. I dare say I'm peculiar." Ingpen said this quite seriously, prepared to consider impartially the proposition that he was peculiar. "The fact is, my boy, I think my freedom is worth a bit more than I could get out of marriage."

"That's all very well," said Edwin, trying to speak with the same dispassionate conviction as Ingpen, and scarcely succeeding. "But look what you miss! Look

how you live!"

Almost involuntarily he glanced with self-complacency round the unlovely, un-

seemly room.

What's the matter with it?" "Why? Ingpen replied uneasily. A slight flush came into his cheeks. "Nobody has a more comfortable bed or more comfortable boots than I have. How many women can make coffee as good as mine? No woman ever born can make first-class tea. I have all I want."

"No, you don't. And what's the good of talking about coffee, and tea, and beds?"

"Well, what else is there I want that I haven't got? If you mean fancy cushions and draperies-no, thanks!"

"You know what I mean, all right. And then 'freedom,' as you say. What do you mean by freedom?"

"I don't specially mean," said Ingpen, tranquil and benevolent, "what I may call physical freedom. I'd give that up. I like a certain amount of untidiness, for instance, and I don't think an absence of dust is the greatest thing in the world; but I wouldn't in the least mind giving all that up. What I won't give up is my intellectual Perhaps I mean intellectual freedom. honesty. I'd give up even my intellectual freedom, if I could be deprived of it fairly and honestly; but I shouldn't be. There's almost no intellectual honesty in marriage. The entire affair is a There can't be. series of compromises, chiefly base on the part of the man. The alternative is absolute subjection of the woman, which is No woman not absolutely a offensive. slave ever hears the truth, except in anger. You can't say the same about men, and you know it. I'm not blaming; I'm stating. Even assuming a married man gets a few advantages that I miss, they're all purely physical-"

Oh, no! Not at all!"

"My boy," Ingpen insisted, sitting up, and gazing earnestly at Edwin, "analyze them down, and they're all physical-all! And I tell you I won't pay the price for them. I won't! I've no grievance against woman; I can enjoy being with women as much as anybody, but I won't-I will not -live permanently on their level. That's why I say I might have been 'fool enough' to get married. It's quite simple."

" H-m!"

Edwin, although indubitably one of those who had committed the vast folly of marriage, and therefore subject to Ingpen's indictment, felt not the least constraint, nor any need to offer an individual defense. Ingpen's demeanor seemed to have lifted the argument above the personal. The fear of truth was exorcised. Freedom of thought existed in that room in England. Edwin reflected:

"Why on earth can't Hilda and I discuss like that?"

The red-hot coals in the grate subsided together.

"And I'll tell you another thing," Ingpen commenced.

He was stopped by the entrance of Mrs. Dummer, a fat woman, with an old japanned tray. Mrs. Dummer came in like a desperate, forlorn hope. Her aged, grim, and yet somewhat hysterical face seemed

"I'm going to clear this table and get on with my work, even if I die for it at

the hands of a brutal tyrant."

"Mrs. Dummer," said Ingpen in a weak voice, leaning back in his chair, "would you mind fetching me my tonic off my dressing-table? I've forgotten it."
"Bless us!" exclaimed Mrs. Dummer.

As she hurried out, Ingpen winked placidly at Edwin in the room in which the

shadows were already falling.

Nevertheless, when the dog-cart arrived at the front door, Ingpen did seem to show some signs of exhaustion. He went out with Edwin, plaintively teased Hilda about the insufferable pride of those who sit in driving-seats, and took leave of her with the most punctilious ceremonial.

"I'll sit behind going home, I think," said Edwin. "George, you can sit with

your mother."

"Tchik! Tchik!" Hilda signaled.

The mare, with a jerk, started off down the misty and darkening road.

The second and major catastrophe occurred very soon after the arrival in Trafalgar Road. It was three-quarters of an hour after sunset, and the street-lamps were lighted. Unchpin, with gloomy fatalism, shivered obscurely in the dark porch, waiting to drive the dog-cart to the stable.

Hilda had requested his presence; it was she, also, who had got him to bring the equipage up to the house in the morning. She had implied, but not asserted, that to harness the mare and trot up to Bleakridge was the work of a few minutes, and that a

few minutes' light labor could make no real difference to Unchpin's Christmas Day.

Edwin, descrying Unchpin in the porch, saw merely a defenseless man who had been robbed of the most sacred holiday of the year in order to gratify the selfish caprice of an overbearing woman. He perceived that he would be compelled to stop her from using his employees as her private servants, and that the prohibition would probably cause trouble.

Hilda demanded curtly of Unchpin why he had not waited in the warm kitchen, according to her instructions, instead of catching his death of cold on the porch. The reply was that he had rung and knocked fifteen times without getting a

response.

At this Hilda became angry, not only with Emmie, the defaulting servant, but with the entire servant class and with the world. Emmie, the new cook, and temporarily the sole resident servant, was to have gone to Maggie's for her Christmas dinner; but as Maggie at the last moment decided to go to Clara's for the middle of the day, Emmie was told to go with her and be as useful as she could at Mrs. Benbow's until a quarter past two.

"I hope you've got your latch-key, Ed-

win," said Hilda threateningly.

"I have," he said dryly.

"Oh!" she muttered, as if saying:
"Well, after all, you're no better than you ought to be!"

She took the key. While she opened the door, Edwin surreptitiously gave half a crown to Unchpin, who was lighting the

carriage-lamps.

The front doorway yawned black like the portal of a tomb. The place was a terrible negation of Christmas. Edwin felt for the radiator; it was as cold to the touch as a dead hand. He lit the hall-lamp, and the decorations of holly and mistletoe contrived by Hilda and George with smiles and laughter on Christmas eve stood revealed as the very symbol of insincerity.

Without taking off his hat and coat, he went into the unlighted, glacial drawing-room, where Hilda was kneeling at the grate and striking matches. A fragment of newspaper blazed, and then the flame ex-

pired. The fire was badly laid.

"I'm sick of servants!" Hilda exclaimed with fury. "Sick! They're all alike!"

Her tone furiously blamed Edwin and everybody.

Edwin knew that the day was a pyramid, of which this moment was the dreadful apex. At intervals during the drive home Hilda had talked confidentially to George of the wondrous things he and she could do if they only resided in the country—things connected with flowers, vegetables, cocks, hens, ducks, cows, rabbits, horses. She had sketched out the life of a mistress of Ladderedge Hall, and she had sketched it out for the benefit of the dull, hard man sitting behind.

She had exasperated him. She had wilfully and deliberately exasperated him. Not one word had been said about Ladderedge Hall, but Ladderedge Hall loomed always between them. Deadly war was imminent. Let it come! He would prefer war to a peace which meant for him nothing but in-

sults and injustice.

He turned bruskly and lit the chandelier. On the table beneath it lay the writing-case that Hilda had given George, and the edition of Matthew Arnold that she had given to Edwin for a Christmas present. One of Edwin's Christmas presents to her, an ermine stole, she was wearing round her neck. Tragic absurdities, these false tokens of love!

Edwin said, with frigid and disdainful

malevolence:

"I wish you'd control yourself, Hilda. The fact that a servant's a bit late on Christmas Day is no reason for you to behave like a spoiled child. You're offensive!"

Hilda turned her head and glared at Edwin. She threw back her shoulders, and her thick eyebrows seemed to meet in a

passionate frown.

"Yes," she said, with her clear, stinging articulation. "That's just like you, that is! I lend my servant to your sister. She doesn't send her back-and it's my fault! I should have thought the Benbows twisted you round their little finger enough, without you having to insult me because of them. Goodness knows what tricks they didn't play to get your aunt's money! And now they make you do all the work of the estate! You can never spare a minute from the works for me, but you can spend hours and hours for Aunty Hamps's estate and the Benbows!" She paused and spoke more thickly: "But I don't see why you should insult me on the top of it!"

She sobbed.

"You make me ill!" said Edwin, almost savagely.

He walked out of the room and pulled the door to.

George was descending the stairs.

"Where are you going to, uncle?" demanded George as Edwin opened the front door.

"I'm going down to see Aunty Maggie," Edwin answered, forcing himself to speak very gently. "Tell your mother, if she asks."

The boy guessed the situation. It was humiliating that he should guess it, and still more humiliating to be compelled to make use of him in the fatal affair.

Edwin walked at a moderate pace down Trafalgar Road. He did not know where he was going. Certainly he was not going to see Maggie. Maggie would be at Clara's; and, in a misfortune, he would never go to Clara's; only when he was successful and triumphant would he expose himself to the Benbows.

The weather was damp and chill without rain. The chilliness was rather tonic and agreeable to his body, and he felt quite warm, though on getting down from the dog-cart a few minutes earlier he had been cold almost to the point of numbness. He could not remember how or when, the change occurred.

Every street-lamp was the center of a greenish-gray sphere, which presaged rain, as if the street-lamp were the moon. The pavements were greasy with black slime, the road deep in lamp-reflecting mire through which the tram-lines ran straight and gleaming. Far down the slope a cage of light moving obscurely between the glittering avenue of lamps indicated the steamtram as it lifted toward the farther hill into the heart of the town. Where the lamps merged together and vanished, but a little to the left, the illuminated dial of the clock in the Town Hall tower glowed in the dark heavens.

The street was deserted. All the little shops were shut; even the little green-grocer's shop, which never closed, was shut now, and its customary winter smell of oranges and apples withdrawn. The little inns, not yet open, showed through their lettered plate windows one watching jet of gas amid blue and red paper festoons and bunches of holly.

The gloomy fronts of nearly all the houses were pierced with oblongs of light, on which sometimes appeared transient

shadows of human beings. A very few other human beings, equally mysterious, passed, furtive and baffling, up and down the slope. Melancholy, familiar, inexplicable, and piteous—the melancholy of existence itself—rose like a vapor out of the sodden ground, ennobling all the scene.

Edwin's brain throbbed and shook like an engine-house, in which the machinery was his violent thoughts. He no longer saw his marriage as a chain of disconnected episodes; he saw it as a drama, the true meaning of which was at last revealed by the climax now upon him. He had had many misgivings about it, and had put them away, and they all swept back, presenting themselves as a series of signs that pointed to inevitable disaster.

He had been blind, from wilfulness or cowardice. He now had vision. He said to himself as millions of men and women had said to themselves, with awestruck

" My marriage was a mistake!"

He began to face the consequences of the admission. He was not such a fool as to attach too much importance to the immediate quarrel, nor even to the half-suppressed but supreme dissension concerning a place of residence. He assumed even that the present difficulties would somehow, with more or less satisfaction, be adjusted. What, however, would not and could not be adjusted was the temperament that produced them.

These difficulties, which had been preceded by smaller difficulties, would be followed by greater. It was inevitable. To hope otherwise would be weakly sentimental, as his optimism during the vigil in Aunty Hamps's bedroom had been weakly sentimental. He must face the truth:

"She won't alter her ways—and I sha'n't stand them."

No matter what their relations might in future superficially appear to be, their union was over. Or, if it was not actually over, it soon would be over, for the forces to shatter it were uncontrollable and increasing in strength.

"Of course, she can't help being herself!" he said impartially. "But what's that got to do with me?"

His indictment of his wife was terrific and not to be answered. She had always been a queer girl. On the first night he ever saw her she had run after him into his father's garden, and stood with him in the garden-porch that he had since done away with, and spoken to him in the strangest manner. She was abnormal. The dismal and perilous adventure with George Cannon could not have happened to a normal woman.

She could not see reason, and her sense of justice was non-existent. If she wanted a thing, she must have it. In reality she was a fierce and unscrupulous egotist, incapable of understanding a point of view other than her own. Imagine her bursting out like that about Aunty Hamps's will! She did not argue—she felt; and the disaster was that she did not feel rightly. Imagine her trying to influence Ingpen's housekeeping, to worry the man—she the guest and he the host! What would she say if anybody played the same game on her?

She could not be moderate. She expected every consideration from others, but she would yield none. She had desired a horse and trap. She had received it, and how had she used the gift? She had used it in defiance of the needs of the works. She had upset everybody and everything, and assuredly Unchpin had a very legitimate grievance.

She had said that she could not feel at home in her own house while the house belonged to Maggie. Edwin had obediently bought the house, and now she wanted another house. She scorned her husband's convenience and preferences, and she wanted a house that was preposterously inac-

cessible.

The satisfaction of her caprice for a dogcart had not in the slightest degree appeased her egotism. On the contrary, it had further excited her egotism and sharpened its aggressiveness. Her acrimony had gradually increased throughout the day, hiding for a time under malicious silences and enigmatic demeanors, darting out in remarks to third persons and drawing back, and at last displaying itself openly, cruelly, monstrously. The injustice of it all passed belief.

There was no excuse for Hilda, and there never would be any excuse for her. She was impossible; she would be still more impossible. He did not make her responsible; he admitted that she was not responsible. But at the same time, with a disdainful resentment, he condemned and hated her.

He recalled Ingpen's: "I won't pay the price."

"And I won't," he said. "The end has come!"

He envied Ingpen. There flitted through his mind the dream of liberty—not the liberty of ignorant youth, but liberty with experience and knowledge to use it. Ravishing prospect! Marriage had advantages; but he could retain those advantages in freedom. He knew what a home ought to be; he was not, in that respect, like Ingpen, who suffered from his inability to produce and maintain comfort.

He remembered Ingpen's habitual phrase about the proper place for women—" behind the veil." It was a phrase which intensely annoyed women; but nevertheless

how true!

He saw the existence of males, with its rationality and its dependableness, its simplicity, its directness, its honesty, as something ideal. And as he pictured such an existence—with or without the romance of mysterious and interesting creatures ever modestly waiting for attention behind the veil, further souvenirs of Hilda's wilful naughtiness and injustice rushed into his mind by thousands. In formulating his indictment against her, he had overlooked ninety per cent of them; they were end-He marshaled themless, innumerable. again and again, with the fiercest virulence, the most somber gloom.

In the hollow where Trafalgar Road begins to be known as Duck Bank, he turned to the left, and, crossing the foot of Woodisun Bank, arrived at one of the oldest quarters of the town, where St. Luke's church stands in its churchyard amid a triangle of little, ancient houses. By the light of the new and improved gas-lamp at the churchyard gates could be seen the dark silhouette of the Norman tower and the occasional gleam of white gravestones.

One solitary couple, arm in arm, and bending slightly toward each other, came sauntering in the mud toward the illumination of the lamp. The man was a volunteer, with a brilliant vermilion tunic, white belt, and black trousers; he wore his hat jauntily and carried a diminutive cane; pride was his warm overcoat. The girl was stout and short, with a heavily flowered hat and a dark, amorphous cloak; under her left arm she carried a parcel.

They were absorbed in themselves. Edwin discerned first the man's face, in which was a gentle and harmless coxcombry; and then the girl's face, ecstatic, upward-gazing, seeing absolutely naught but the youth. It was Emmie's face, as Edwin perceived after a momentary doubt due to his unfamiliarity with the inhabitants of his own house.

Emmie, whose place was in the kitchen among saucepans and crockery, dish-clouts and brushes, had escaped into another realm where time is not. She was not even young; she was probably older than the adored soldier. But her rapt ecstasy, her fearful bliss, made a marvelous sight, rendered touching by the girl's gawkiness.

"Can it be possible," thought Edwin, " that a creature capable of such surpassing emotion is compelled to cook my bacon and

black my boots?"

The couple, wordless, strolled onward, sticking close to the railing. The churchyard was locked, but Emmie and the soldier were doing the best they could to satisfy that instinct which in the Five Towns seems to drive lovers to graves for their pleasure. The little houses cast here and there a blind yellow eye on the silent, tranquil scene. Edwin turned abruptly back into Woodisun Bank, feeling that he was a disturber of the peace.

Suddenly deciding to walk up to Hillport " for the sake of exercise," he quickened his pace. After a mile and a half, when he had crossed the railway at Shawport and was on the Hillport rise, and the Five Towns had begun to spread out in a map behind him, he noticed that he was perspiring. He felt exhilarated, and moved

still faster.

His mood was now changed. The spectacle of Emmie and the soldier had thrown him violently out of resentment into won-His indignation was somewhat exhausted. He kept thinking of the moment in the morning when, standing ready to jump from the dog-cart, his wife had said:

"Catch me, both of you!"

He recalled vividly the sensation of her momentary yielding-imperceptible yet unforgetable—as he supported her strongly in his arms; and with this memory was mingled the smell of velvet. Was she in that gesture confiding to him the deepest secret? Rubbish! But now he no longer looked down on her disdainfully. Honesty made him admit that it was puerile to affect disdain of an individuality so powerful and so mysterious. If she was a foe, she was at any rate a dangerous fighter, and not to be played with. And yet she could be a trifle, a wisp of fragile flesh in his arms!

He saw the beatific face of Emmie against the churchyard gates under the lamp. Why not humor Hilda? Why not let her plant their home according to her caprice? Certainly not! Never would he do it! Why should he?

Time after time he angrily rejected the Time after time it returned. What did it matter to Hilda where she lived? The first consideration in choosing a home ought to be, and must be, the consideration of business convenience. Yet, what did it matter to him where his home was? He remembered a phrase of Ingpen's:

" I don't live on that plane.

Could he not adapt himself? He dreamed of very rapid transit between Ladderedge Hall and the works—a fast-trotting horse, and a trap with india-rubber tires; himself the driver; sometimes Hilda the driver; an equipage to earn renown in the district.

"Clayhanger's trap "-" He drives in from Ladderedge in thirty-five minutes. The horse simply won't walk; doesn't know

how to!"

And so on. He had heard such talk of others.

Then the pleasure, the mere pleasurecall it sensual or what you like—of granting a caprice to the capricious creature! If a thing afforded her joy, why not give it? To see her in the rôle of mistress of a country house, excited about charitable schemes, protecting the poor, working her will upon gardeners and grooms, offering sugar to a horse, nursing a sick dog! Amusing! Agreeable! And all that activity of hers a mere dependence of his own! Flattering to his pride!

He could afford it easily, for he was richer even than his wife supposed. To let the present house ought not to be difficult. To sell it advantageously ought not to be impossible. In this connection he thought, though not seriously, of Tom Swetnam, who had at last got himself engaged to one of those Scandinavian women about whom he

had been chaffed for years.

He was carried away by his own dream. To realize that dream he had only to yield, to nod negligently, to murmur with benevolent tolerance:

"All right! Do as you please."

He would have nothing to withdraw, for

he had uttered no refusal

No, he would never yield! It would be wrong, and it would be dangerous, to yield. And yet why not yield?

He recrossed the railway, and crossed Fowlea Brook, a boundary, back into the borough. The dark path lay parallel with the canal, but below it. He had gone right through Hillport and round Hillport Marsh, and returned down the flank of the great ridge that protects the Five Towns on the west. He could not recollect the details of the walk; he only knew that he had done it all, and that his boots were very muddy.

A change in the consistency of the mud caused him to look up at the sky, which was clearing and showed patches of faint stars. A frost had set in, despite the rainy prophecy of the street-lamps. In a few moments he had climbed the short, steep, curving slope on to the canal bridge. He

was breathless and very hot.

He stopped and sat on the parapet. In his school-days he had crossed this bridge twice a day on the journey to and from Oldcastle. Many times he had lingered on it. But he had practically forgotten the little episodes of his school-days, which seemed now almost to belong to another

incarnation.

The lights of Bursley, Bleakridge, Hanbridge, and Cauldon hung round the eastern horizon in a glowing arc. To the north presided the clock of Bursley Town Hall, and to the south the clock of Cauldon church; but both were much too far off to be deciphered. Below and around the church clock the vague fires of Cauldon Bar Ironworks played, and the tremendous respiration of the blast-furnaces filled the evening. Beneath him gleamed the foul water of the canal.

He trembled with the fever that precedes a supreme decision. He trembled as if he were about to decide whether or not he would throw himself into the canal. Should he accept the country-house scheme? Ought he to accept it? The question was not simply that of a place of residence; it

concerned all his life.

He admitted that marriage must be a mutual accommodation. He was, and always had been, ready to accommodate. But Hilda was very unjust. Of that he was

definitely convinced.

How could he excuse such injustice as hers? On previous occasions he had invented excuses for her conduct, but they were not convincing excuses. They were compromises between his intellectual honesty and his desire for peace. They were, at bottom, sentimentalism.

And then there flashed into his mind, complete, the great discovery of all his career. It was banal; it was commonplace; it was what every one knew. Yet it was the great discovery of all his career. If Hilda had not been unjust in the assertion of her own individuality there could be no merit in yielding to her. To yield to a just claim was not meritorious, though to withstand it would be wicked.

He was objecting to injustice as a child objects to rain on a holiday. Injustice was. A tremendous actuality! It had to be faced and accepted. He himself was unjust. At any rate he intellectually conceived that he must be unjust, though he could remember no instance of injustice on his part.

To reconcile oneself to injustice was the master achievement. He had read it; he had been aware of it; but he had never really felt it till that moment on the dark canal bridge. He was awed, enchanted, thrilled by the realization. He longed ardently to put it to the test. He did put it to the test. He yielded on the canal bridge; and in yielding, it seemed to him that he was victorious.

He thought confidently and joyously:

"I'm not going to be beaten by Hilda!
And I'm not going to be beaten by marriage. A nice thing if I had to admit that I wasn't clever enough to be a husband!"

He was happy, but somewhat timorously so. He had the sense to suspect that his discovery would scarcely transform marriage into an everlasting Eden, and that serious trouble would not improbably recur. "Marriage keeps on all the time till

you're dead!" he said to himself.

But he profoundly knew that he had advanced a stage, that he had acquired new wisdom and new power, and that no danger in the future could equal the danger that was past.

" I know where I am!" he thought.

When he got into Trafalgar Road, at the summit of Bleakridge, he hesitated to enter his own house, on account of the acute social difficulties that awaited him there. Then he braced himself, and, mounting the steps of the porch, felt in his pocket for his latch-key.

It was not there. Hilda had taken it and not returned it. She never did return it when she borrowed it, and probably she

never would.

He had intended to slip quietly into the house, and prepare, if possible, an astute opening to minimize the difficulty of the scene which must inevitably occur. For his dignity would need some protection. He wished that he had not said quite so certainly to Ingpen:

"I sha'n't take that house."

With every prim formality, Emmie answered his ring. She was wearing the mask and the black frock and the white apron and cap of her vocation. No sign of a heart, or of passion, or of ecstasy! Incredible creatures—they were all incredible!

He thought, nervous:

"I shall meet Hilda in half a second." George ran into the hall, wearing his new

green shade over his eyes.

"Here he is, mother!" cried George. "I say, nunks, Emmie brought up a parcel for you from Uncle Albert and Aunty Clara. Here it is! It wasn't addressed outside, so I opened it."

He indicated the hall table, on which, in a bed of tissue-paper and brown paper lay a dreadful flat inkstand of blue glass

and bronze, with a card:

Best wishes to Edwin from Albert and Clara.

George and Edwin gazed at each other with understanding.

"Just my luck, isn't it, sonny?" said Edwin. "It's worse than last year's."

"You poor dear!" said Hilda, appearing, all smiles and caressing glances. She was in a pale-gray dress. "What ever can you do with it? Emmie"—to the maid vanishing into the kitchen—"we'll have supper now."

"Yes," said Edwin to himself, with light tolerance. "Yes, my lady. You're all smiles because you're bent on getting Ladderedge Hall out of me. You don't know what a near shave you've had of getting

something else!"

He was elated. The welcome of his familiar home was exquisite to him. And the incalculable woman with a single gesture had most unexpectedly annihilated the unpleasant past and its consequences. He could yield upon the grand contention how and when he chose. He had his acquiescence awaiting like a delightful surprise for Hilda.

As he looked at her lovingly, with all her crimes of injustice thick upon her, he clearly realized that he saw her as no other person saw her, and that because it was so, she in her entirety was indispensable to him. And when he tried to argue impartially and aloofly with himself about

rights and wrongs, asinine reason was swamped by an entirely irrational and wise joy in the simple fact of the criminal's existence.

In the early spring of 1897 there was an evening party at the Clayhangers'! But it was not called a party; it was not even called a reception. The theory of the affair was that Hilda had "just asked a few people to come in, without any fuss." The inhabitants of the Five Towns had, and still have, an aversion for every sort of formal hospitality, or indeed for any hospitality other than the impulse and the

haphazard.

The break-up of the Orgreave household had been a hard blow to the cult of hospitality in Bleakridge. Lane End House, in the old days, was a creative center of hospitality; for the force of example, the desire to emulate, and the necessity of paying in kind for what one has permitted oneself to receive will make hosts of those who by their own initiative would never have sent out an invitation. When the Orgreaves vanished, sundry persons in Bleakridge were discouraged — and particularly Edwin and Hilda, whose musical evenings had never recovered from the effect of the circumstances of the first one. They entertained only by fits and starts.

Hilda was handicapped by the fact that she could not easily strike up friendships with other women. She had had one friend, and after Janet's departure she had fully confided in no woman. Moreover, it was only at intervals that Hilda felt the need

of companionship.

Her present party was due chiefly to what Edwin in his more bitter moods would have called snobbishness—to wit, partly a sudden resolve not to be outshone by the Swetnams, who in recent years, as the younger generation of the family grew up, had beyond doubt increased their ascendency; and partly the desire to render memorable the last months of her residence in Bleakridge.

The list of Hilda's guests, and the names absent from it, gave an indication of the trend of social history. The Benbows were not asked; the relations of the two families remained as friendly as ever they were, but the real breach between them, caused by profound differences of taste and intelligence, was now complete.

Maggie would have been asked had she

not refused in advance, from a motive of shyness. In all essential respects Maggie had been annexed by Clara and Albert. She had given up Aunty Hamps's house — of which the furniture had been either appropriated or sold—and gone to live with the Benbows as a working aunt. In spite of Albert's default in the matter of interest, she forewent her rights, slept in a small room with Amy, paid a share of the household expenses, and did the work of a nursemaid and servant combined — simply because she was Maggie.

Jim Orgreave was not invited; briefly, he had become impossible, though he was still well-dressed. More strange — Tom Orgreave and his wife had only been invited after some discussion, and had declined! Tom was growing extraordinarily secretive, solitary, and mysterious. It was reported that Mrs. Tom had neither servant nor nurse-maid, and that she dared not ask her husband for money to buy clothes. Yet Edwin and Tom, when they met in the street, always stopped for a talk, generally

about books.

Daisy Marrion, who said openly that Tom and Mrs. Tom were a huge disappointment to everybody, was invited, and she accepted. Janet Orgreave had arrived in Bursley on a visit to the Clayhangers on the very day of the party. The Cheswardines were asked, mainly on account of Stephen, whose bluff, utterly intellectual, profound good nature, and whose adoration of his wife, were gradually endearing him to the perceptive.

Mr. and Mrs. Fearns were requested to bring their daughter Annunciata, now almost marriageable, and also Mlle. Renée Souchon, the new French governess of the younger Fearns children. Folks hinted their astonishment that Alma Fearns should have been imprudent enough to put so exotic a woman under the same roof with

her husband.

Ingpen needed no invitation; nothing could occur at the Clayhangers' without him. Dr. Sterling was the other mature bachelor. Finally, in the catalogue were four Swetnams—the vigorous and acute Sarah—who was a mere acquaintance—aged twenty-five, Tom Swetnam, and two younger brothers.

Tom had to bring with him the prime excuse for the party—namely, Miss Manna Höst, of Copenhagen, to whom Hilda intended to show that the Swetnams were not

the only people on earth. There were thus eight women, eight men—who had put on evening dress out of respect for the for-

eigner-and George.

At eleven o'clock, when the musical part of the entertainment was over, Miss Höst had already secured for herself the position which later she was to hold as the wife of Tom Swetnam. Bleakridge had been asked to meet her and inspect her, and the opinion of Bleakridge was soon formed that Copenhagen must be a wondrous place, and that Tom Swetnam knew his way about.

Manna Höst was twenty-three, tall and athletically slim, and more blond than any girl ever before seen in the Five Towns. She had golden hair, and she wore white. It was understood that she spoke Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian. She talked French with facility to Renée Souchon; and Tom said that her knowledge of German surpassed her knowledge of either French or English. She spoke English excellently, with a quaint, endearing accent, but with correctness. Sometimes she would use an idiom picked up from the Swetnam boys, exquisitely unaware that it was not quite suited to the lips of a young woman in a strange drawing-room; her innocence, however, purified it.

She sang classical songs in German, with dramatic force, and she could play accompaniments. She was thoroughly familiar with all the music haltingly performed by Ingpen, Janet, Annunciata, and young George. Ingpen was very seriously interested in her views thereon. She knew about the French authors from whose works Renée Souchon chose her recitations.

Standing up at the buffet-table in the dining-room, she had fabricated astounding sandwiches in the Danish style. She stated that Danish cooks reckoned ninety - three sorts of sandwiches.

Everybody was much impressed, and Ingpen himself not the least. Ingpen wondered what a girl so complex could see in a man like Tom Swetnam, who, although he could talk about the arts, had no real

feeling for any of them.

But what impressed the company even more than Miss Höst's accomplishments was the candid fervor of her comprehensive interest in life, which was absolutely without self-consciousness or fear. She talked with the same disarming, ingenuous, eager directness to hard-faced Charles Fearns, the secret rake; to his wife, the aging and sweetly-sad mother of a family; to Renée Souchon, who, despite her plainness and her rumored bigotry, seemed to attract all the men in the room by something provocative in her eye and the carriage of her hips; to the simple and powerful Stephen Cheswardine; to Vera, the delicious and elegant cat; to Dr. Sterling with his Scotch mysticism; and to Tertius Ingpen the connoisseur and avowed bachelor.

She spoke to Hilda, Janet, and Daisy Marrion as one member of a secret sisterhood to other members, to Annunciata as a young girl, and to George as an initiated sister. She left them to turn to Edwin with a trustful glance, as to one whose special reliability she had divined from the first.

" Have a liqueur, Miss Höst," Edwin enjoined her.

In a moment she was sipping Chartreuse. "I love it!" she murmured.

But somehow, beneath all such freedoms and frankness, she did not cease to be a maiden with reserves of mystery. Her assumption that nobody could misinterpret her demeanor was remarkable to the English observers, and far more so to Renée Souchon. All gazed at her piquant, blond face, scarcely pretty, with its ardent, restless eyes, and felt the startling compliment of her quick, searching sympathy. And she, tinglingly aware of her success, proved easily equal to the ordeal of it.

At half past eleven, when the entire assemblage passed into the drawing-room, she dropped onto the piano-stool and began a Waldteufel waltz with irresistible seductiveness. Hilda's heart leaped. In a minute the carpet was up, and the night, which all had supposed to be at an end, began.

At nearly one o'clock in the morning the party was moving strongly by its own acquired momentum, and needed neither the invigoration nor the guidance which hosts often are compelled to give. Hilda, having finished a schottische with Dr. Sterling, missed Janet from the drawing-room. Leaving the room in search of her she saw Edwin with Tom Swetnam and the glowing Manna at the top of the stairs.

"Hello!" she called out. you folks doing?"

Manna's light laugh descended like a shower of crystals.

" Just taking a constitutional," Edwin answered.

His voice pleased Hilda-it was so calm, wise, and kind, and at the same time mysteriously ironical. He had behaved with perfection that evening. She admitted that he was the basis of the evening, that without him she could never have such triumphs. She perceived how steadily and surely he had progressed since their marriage, and how his cautiousness always justified itself, and how he had done all that he had said he would do.

She had a vision of that same miraculous creative force of his at work, by her volition, in the near future upon Ladderedge Hall. Her mood became a strange compound of humility before him and of selfconfident pride in her own power to influence him.

In the boudoir Janet was reclining in the sole easy chair. Dressed in gray-she had abandoned white-she was as slim as ever, and did not look her age. With face flushed, eyes glinting under drooping lids, and bosom heaving rather quickly, she might have passed in the half light for a young married woman still under the excitement of matrimony, instead of a virgin of forty.

"I was so done up I had to come and hide myself!" she murmured in a dreamy tone.

"Well, of course, you've had the journey

to-day, and everything."

Through the closed door came the muffled sound of the piano, played by Annunciata. No melody was distinguishable—only the percussion of the bass chords beating out the time of a new mazurka. It was as if the whole house faintly and passionately pulsed in the fever of the dance.

"I see you've got a Rossetti," said Janet at last, fingering a blue volume that lay on

the desk.

"Edwin gave it to me," Hilda replied. "He's gradually giving me all my private poets; but somehow I haven't been able to read much lately. I expect it's the idea of moving into the country that makes me restless."

"But is it settled—all that?"

" Of course it's settled, my dear. I'm determined to take him away "-Hilda spoke of her husband as of a parcel, or an intelligent bear on a chain, as loving wives may-" right out of all this. I'm sure it will be a good thing for him. He doesn't mind, really. He's promised me. Only he wants to make sure of either selling or letting this house first. He's always very cautious, Edwin is. He simply hates to do a thing straight off."

"Yes, he is rather that way inclined,"

said Janet.

"I wanted him to take Ladderedge at once, even if we didn't move into it. Anyhow, we couldn't move into it immediately, because of the repairs and things. They'll take a fine time, I know. But no, he wouldn't! He must see where he stands with this house before he does anything else. You can't alter him, you know!"

The door was cautiously pushed, and

Ingpen entered.

"So you're discussing her!" he said, low, with a satiric grin.

"Discussing who?" Hilda demanded

" You know."

"Tertius," said Hilda, "you're worse than a woman."

He giggled with delight.

"I suppose you mean that to be very severe."

"If you want to know, we're talking about Ladderedge."

"So apologize!" said Janet, sitting up. Ingpen's face straightened, and he began

to tap his teeth with his thumb.

"Curious, that's just what I came in about. I've been trying to get a chance to tell you all the evening. There's somebody else after Ladderedge, a man from Axe. He's been to look over it twice this week. I thought I'd tip you the wink."

Hilda stood erect, putting her shoulders

back.

"Have you told Edwin?" she asked very curtly.

" Yes."

"What did he say?"

"He said it was only a dodge of the house-agent's to quicken things up."

"And do you think it is?"

"Well, I doubt it."
Voices including Edwin's cou

Voices, including Edwin's, could be heard in the hall.

"Here, I'm not going to be caught conspiring with you!" Ingpen whispered. "It's more than my place is worth," and he

departed.

The voices receded, and Hilda noiselessly shut the door. Everything was now changed for her by a tremendous revulsion. The beating of the measure of the mazurka seemed horrible and maddening. Her thought was directed upon Edwin with the cold fury of which only love is capable. She saw all her grandiose plan ruined. She felt sure that the rival was powerful and

determined, and that Edwin would let him win, either by failing to bid against him,

or by mere shilly-shallying.

Ladderedge was not the only suitable country residence in the country; there were doubtless many others; but Ladderedge was just what she wanted, and—more important with her—it had become a symbol. She had a misgiving that if they did not get Ladderedge they would remain in Trafalgar Road, Bursley, forever and ever. Yet, angry and desperate though she was, she somehow did not accuse and arraign Edwin—any more than she would have accused and arraigned a climate. He was, in fact, the climate in which she lived. A moment ago she had said:

"You can't alter him!"

But now all the energy of her volition cried out that he must be altered.

"My girl," she said, turning to Janet, do you think you can stand a scene tomorrow?"

"A scene?" Janet repeated the words guardedly. The look on Hilda's face some-

what alarmed her.

"Between Edwin and me. I'm absolutely determined that we shall take Ladderedge, and I don't care how much of a row we have over it."

"It isn't as bad as all that?" Janet softly

murmured, with her skill to soothe.

"Yes, it is!" said Hilda violently. "You don't know, Janet. Nobody knows except me. I must get him further away from his business. He'll soon be the slave of it, if he keeps on. Oh, I don't mean he stays at nights at it. He scarcely ever does. he's always thinking about it. He simply can't bear being a minute late for it; everything must give way to it—he takes that as a matter of course, and that's what annoys me, especially as there's no reason for it, seeing how much he trusts Big James and Simpson. I believe he'd do anything for Big James. He'd listen to Big James far sooner than he'd listen to me. agreeable, fawning old man, and quite stupid! Simpson isn't so bad. I tell you, Edwin only looks on his home as a nice place to be quiet in when he isn't at the works. I've never told him so, and I don't think he suspects it, but I will tell him one of these days. He's very good, Edwin is, in all the little things. He always tries to be just. But he isn't just in the big thing. He's most frightfully unjust. sometimes wonder where he imagines I

come in. Of course, he'd do any mortal thing for me-except spare half a minute from the works. What do I care about money? I don't care that much about money. When there's money I can spend it, that's all. But I'd prefer to be poor, and him to be rude and cross and impatient which he scarcely ever is—than have this feeling all the time that it's the works first and everything else second. I don't mind for myself—no, really I don't, at least very little! But I do mind for him. I call it humiliating for a man to get like that. It puts everything upside down. Look at Stephen Cheswardine, for instance. There's a pretty specimen! And Edwin will soon be as bad as he!"

"But every one says how fond Stephen

is of his wife!"

"And isn't Edwin fond of me? Stephen Cheswardine despises his wife—only he can't do without her. That's all. He treats her accordingly. And I shall be the same."

"Oh. Hilda!"

"Yes, I shall. Yes, I shall. But I won't have it. I'd as lief be married to a man like Charles Fearns. He isn't a slave to his business, anyhow. I shall get Edwin further away. And when I've got him away I shall see he doesn't go to the works on Saturdays, too. I've quite made up my mind about that. And if he isn't on the town council he can be on the county council—that's quite as good, I hope!"

Never before had Hilda spoken so freely to any one, not even to Janet. Tears stood in her eyes—and yet she faced Janet, ma-

king no effort to hide them.

"My dear!" breathed the deprecating Janet, shocked out of her tepid, virginal calm by a revelation of conjugal misery such as had never been vouchsafed to her. She was thinking: "How can the poor thing face her guests after this? Everybody will see that something's happened—it will be awful!"

There was silence.

The door opened with a sharp sound, and Hilda turned away her head. The music could be heard plainly, and beneath it the dull shuffling of feet on the bare boards of the drawing-room. Manna Höst came in, radiant, followed by Edwin and Tom Swetnam.

"Well, Hilda," said Edwin, with a slight timid constraint, "I've got rid of your house for you. Here are the deluded

victims."

"We have seen every corner of it, Mrs. Clayhanger," said Manna Höst enthusiastically. "It is lovely! But how can you wish to leave it? It is so practical."

Perceiving the agitation of Hilda's face, Edwin added in a lower voice to his wife:

"I thought I wouldn't say anything until it was settled, for fear you might be let in for a disappointment. He'll buy it if I leave fifteen hundred on mortgage. So I shall. But, of course, he wanted her to have a good look at it first."

"How unfair I am!" thought Hilda, as she made some banal remark to Miss Höst. "Don't I know I can always rely on him?"

"Mr. Clayhanger made us promise not to—" Miss Höst began to explain.

"It was just like him!" Hilda interrupt-

ed, smiling.

She had a strong desire to jump at Edwin and kiss him. She was saved. Her grandiose plan would proceed. The house sold, Edwin was bound to secure Ladderedge Hall against no matter what rival; and he would do it. But it was the realization of her power over her husband that

gave her the profoundest joy.

About an hour later, when every one felt that the party really was over, the guests, reluctant to leave, and excited afresh by the news that the house had changed hands during the revel, were all assembled in the drawing-room. A few were seated on the chairs, which, with the tables, had been pushed against the walls. George was squatted on the carpet rolled up into the hearth, where the fire was extinct; he was not wearing his green shade. The rest were grouped around Manna Höst in the middle of the room.

Apparently as fresh as at the start, and picking delicately at a sweet biscuit, the flushed blonde stood answering questions about her views on England, and especially on the Five Towns. She was quite sure of herself, and utterly charming in her self-confidence.

Annunciata Fearns envied her acutely. The other women were a little saddened by the thought of all the disillusions that inevitably lay before her. It was touching to see her glance at Tom Swetnam, convinced that she understood him to the core, and in him all the psychology of his sex.

"Everybody knows," she was saying, "that the English are the finest nation, and I think the Five Towns are much more English than London. That's why I adore the Five Towns. It makes me laugh because you are so English, and you do not know it. I love you!"

"You're flattering us," said Stephen Cheswardine, enchanted with the girl.

Everybody waited in eager delight for her next words.

"Ah!" Manna pouted. "But you have spots!"

"Spots!" repeated young Paul Swetnam, amid a general laugh.

She turned to him:

"You said there were no spots on Knype Football Club, did you not? Well, there is a spot on you English." You are dreadfully exasperating to us Danes. Oh, I mean it! You are exasperating because you will not show your feelings!"

"Tom, that must be one for you," said

Charlie Fearns.

"We're too proud," said Dr. Sterling.
"No," replied Manna, "it is not pride.
You are afraid to show your feelings. It
is because you are cowards—in that!"

"We aren't!" cried Hilda, inspired; and, yielding to the temptation which had troubled her incessantly ever since she left the boudoir, she put her arms round Edwin and kissed him. "So there!"

"Loud applause!" said young George on

the roll of carpet.

He said it kindly, but with a certain superiority, perhaps due to the facts that he was wearing a man's "long trousers" for the first time that night, and that he regarded himself as already almost a Londoner. There was some hand-clapping.

Edwin's eyes had seduced Hilda. Looking at them surreptitiously, she had suddenly recalled another of his tricks—tricks of goodness. When she had told him one evening that Minnie was prematurely the mother of a girl, he had said:

"Well, I'll put a hundred and thirty pounds in the savings-bank for the kid."

"A hundred and thirty pounds! What

are you talking about?"

"A hundred and thirty pounds! I received it from America this very morning as ever is"; and he showed her a draft on Brown, Shipley & Co.

He said "from America." He was too delicate to say "from George Cannon." It had been a triumphant moment for him.

And now, as before them all Hilda held him to her, the delicious thought that she had power over him, that she was shaping the large contours of his existence, made her feel solemn in her bliss. And yet simultaneously she was reflecting, with a scarcely perceptible hardness:

"It's each for himself in marriage, after

all, and I've got my own way!"

Then she noticed the whiteness of his shirt-front under her chin, and that reminded her of his mania for arranging his linen according to his own ideas in his own drawer, and the absurd tidiness of it; and she wanted to laugh.

"What a romance she has made of my life!" thought Edwin, confused and blush-

ing, as she loosed him.

Though he looked round with affection at the walls which would soon no longer be his, the greatness of the adventure of existence with this creature, to him unique, and the eternal expectation of some new ecstasy, left no room in his heart for a regret.

He caught sight of Ingpen alone in a corner by the piano, nervously stroking his silky beard. The memory of the secret woman in Ingpen's room came back to him. Without any process of reasoning he felt very sorry for both of them, and he was aware of a certain condescension in himself toward Ingpen.

THE END

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